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The Six Warning Signs Of Anti-Liberalism

OUR PARLIAMENTARY MONARCHY · MARTIN PERETZ ON WHY DUKAKIS LOST

HE EDITORS:
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THE NEW REPUBLIC

Barbara Tuchman Studs Terkel

The Queen and King of Popular History

Sean Wilentz
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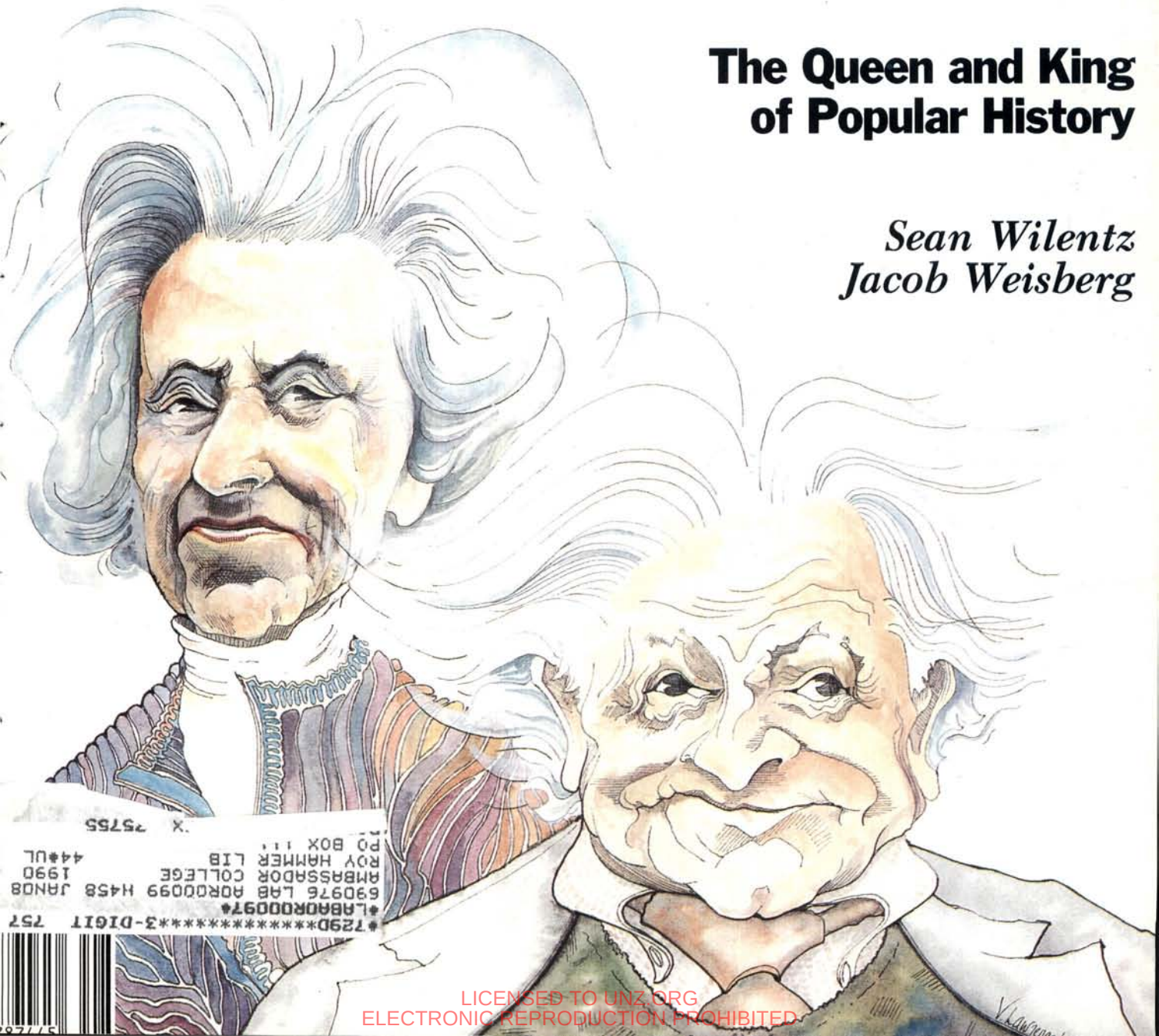

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CORRESPONDENCE

ACLU EXOTICA

To the editors:

Mark Campisano's attack on the American Civil Liberties Union ("Card Games," October 31) demonstrates the ACLU's continued vitality and courage better than any puff piece could. The causes of the "old agenda" he approves of, and assumes to be settled (racial integration, evolution, etc.), were as controversial in their time as the "new agenda of exotic left-wing causes" ("abortion rights, . . . criminal defendants' rights, rights of the mentally ill, and other rights of similar ilk"). Campisano damns the ACLU by crediting its "old agenda" for having cleared "America's main channels of political liberty," thus depriving it of a reason for being. No ACLU member could accept such extravagant praise for a job yet undone. The notion that the ACLU has succeeded in making America a near-perfect democracy exposes the complacency that the ACLU abhors, and that George Bush has adopted as his campaign theme.

JAMES L. JARVIS
Georgetown, Texas

To the editors:

Mark Campisano charges that the ACLU is attempting "to expand individual 'rights' without regard for countervailing public interests." (His use of quotation marks is telling.) But isn't it exactly the point that there are always "countervailing public interests" that can plausibly be cited when individual rights are curtailed?

PETER C. ERICHSEN
Boston, Massachusetts

BALLAD OF JOHN ET AL.

To the editors:

Beatles revisionism is an apt description for the phenomenon Louis Menand notes in "Lives of the Saints" (October 31). But he is an unfortunate victim of another kind of revisionistic approach—the incomplete thesis, much in vogue at the moment, that places John Lennon at the center of the universe. The group wasn't known as "John Lennon and His Beatles," after all. Perhaps, in reviewing both Albert Goldman's and Chet Flippo's books about the respective lives of Lennon and McCartney, Menand has lost his own perspective. Or perhaps, he never had any. He couldn't know much about the history of the Beatles and state that John alone set the tone for the group. From 1957 McCartney was an equal, productive member of the combo, and Harrison joined in 1958. Goon-Show humor—which Menand feels is an intellectual gift from Lennon to his compatriots—is more a Liverpudlian appreciation for absurd humor. All the Beatles, as Menand points out, were adept at it—one of the accomplishments of the group. But not the only one. Another, inevitably, was musicianship. Pete Best was sacked (not by Lennon, but by mutual agreement between the Beatles' producer, George Martin, and McCartney and Harrison themselves) because he couldn't play even moderately well; the comparative evidence is still available on vinyl.

Taking his cue from the two biographies, Menand understandably downplays the musical talent of the group. But the Beatles were not merely an accident of publicity, Three Fabians and their Leader hoping to cash in on "style" alone. Without their music they would not have survived.

D. L. MACLAUGHLAN
Chicago, Illinois

DEPRESSING CASE FOR DRUGS

To the editors:

Taylor Branch favors legalizing drugs ("Let Koop Do It," October 24) but points out that the drug alcohol kills some 11,000 Americans a year. Then he notes that alcohol consumption passed its pre-Prohibition level only 20 years ago. Maybe forcing people 70 years ago to buy liquor on the black market from the mob taught us some discipline.

Alcohol kills, yet our society is steadily increasing our dosage of it. The tobacco lobby blocks most public initiatives for smoker health. To legitimize drugs is to create another lobby. The question is, do we really draw the line, or revise the line every time it gets crossed. Putting the government in the narcotics business will not save any children.

PAUL JENTEL
Washington, D.C.

continued on page 44

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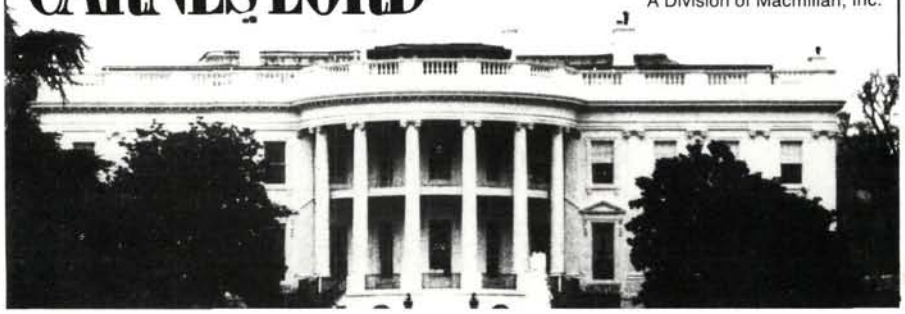

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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2 **CORRESPONDENCE** ..... In defense of the ACLU, the Beatles, &c.

4 **TRB FROM WASHINGTON** ..... TOO CLOSE TO CALL
Spare us the deeper meaning of this election.

5 **THE EDITORS** ..... THE GLOBAL VISION THING
Why Mikhail Gorbachev is more popular than either George Bush or Michael Dukakis.
NOTEBOOK
Mary McCarthy, Tawana Brawley, &c.

8 **FRED BARNES** ..... WHITE HOUSE WATCH: NOW WHAT?
Bush wanted your vote, but he never really said what he'd do with it.

10 **MORTON M. KONDRACKE** ..... BUSH WARFARE
The Bush administration on how to fight wars and how to aid the *contras*.

13 **J. WILLIAM MEDLEY** ..... THE MEDLEY INTERVIEW: 'TRUTH IS THE TEST'
The nation's most distinguished pundit has an exclusive interview with the president-elect.

14 **MARTIN PERETZ** ..... WHY DUKAKIS LOST
It was partly the personality and partly the ideology, but the two failures are connected.

18 **SIMON LAZARUS** ..... KING GEORGE I
Reagan turned the presidency into an impotent monarchy. The real power lies with parliament.

22 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ..... ON FILMS: THE GOOD SHEPARD
A horse stars in *Far North*, Sam Shepard's latest—and loosest—account of unseen America.

24 **STEPHEN HOLMES** ..... THE COMMUNITY TRAP
The *other* attack on the L-word: a six-point guide to the philosophers' war on liberalism.

25 **ROB WILSON** ..... POEM *Come Back*

28 **DENIS DONOGHUE** ..... THE ESSENTIAL POSTURE
The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics and Places by Nadine Gordimer

32 **SEAN WILENTZ** ..... THIRTIESSOMETHING
The First Salute: A View of the American Revolution by Barbara Tuchman

38 **JACOB WEISBERG** ..... SOAPSTUDS
The Great Divide: Second Thoughts on the American Dream by Studs Terkel

41 **JOHN B. JUDIS** ..... THE ALRIGHTNIK OF ARIZONA
Goldwater by Barry M. Goldwater with Jack Casserly

46 **WASHINGTON DIARIST** ..... THE SOLIPSISTIC CAMPAIGN

COVER by Vint Lawrence for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Articles on pages 32 and 38.

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FROM WASHINGTON

Too Close To Call

How close does an election have to be before the loser and his "philosophy"—however the opposition may have chosen to define it—can no longer legitimately be accused of being "outside the mainstream"? You wouldn't know from the mythology that surrounds the elections of 1980 and 1984 that more than two out of five voters chose the Democratic candidate in each case. In fact, you would think from all the talk of Ronald Reagan's "49 state" victory four years ago that anyone who supported Walter Mondale belongs in a museum, or at least comes under the protection of the Endangered Species Act. The Electoral College system may or may not perform a useful democratic function by turning close and potentially controversial outcomes into definitive results. (I don't think it does, myself.) But it clearly disserves honest political discourse by enlarging the winner's claim to manifest destiny.

Surely, though, Michael Dukakis's very respectable 46 percent to 54 percent finish against George Bush, combined with Democratic successes in Congress, ought to spare us a lot of heavy theorizing about the deeper meaning of his defeat. Grand historical forces may or may not have been at work in the Democrats' fifth loss in six presidential elections. (Tired of that statistic yet? Try this handy pain reliever: think of it as the fifth loss in eight elections, or the seventh loss in 15 elections.) But a loss this close proves no historical pattern. Destiny doesn't speak in such a demure whisper. A "philosophy" that attracts 23 voters out of 50 may still be a minority taste, but it is more "mainstream" than the best-selling breakfast cereal or the year's biggest hit movie.

Nor can a philosophy that attracts 40 million out of 87 million voters accurately be described as "marginal," another favorite epithet coming in recent weeks from those who anticipated a Bush landslide. President-elect Bush ought to keep in mind that almost half his constituents—as he himself chose to characterize their vote—apparently love the thought of murderers frolicking in the streets, oppose the Pledge of Allegiance (if not the flag itself), want a weak America, and are dying to pay more taxes. Read their lips.

It is a convention of political commentary that matters such as the slope of a man's shoulders or the slickness of his commercials are of vital importance up to the moment of the election and irrelevant immediately afterward. Once the result is known, the campaign with its uncertainties and its emphasis on minor matters fades away and inevitability stakes its retrospective claim. But this is one campaign that evidently did matter, with a final result well within what might be called the margin of affectability. Dukakis was right after all. In the end, the election was not about ideology, it was about competence: if Bush hadn't run a more skilled campaign, he wouldn't have won.

In the last days before the election, conservatives began an effort to rewrite history about the nature of that skilled campaign. The effort took the form of what lawyers call arguing in the alternative. (Lawyer whose client is accused of stealing a pot and returning it cracked: (*a*) he didn't steal it; (*b*) it was already cracked when he stole it; (*c*) he returned it in perfect condition.) Bush apologists say: (*a*) he didn't fight dirty; (*b*) American politics has always been dirty; (*c*) the Democrats started it last year.

It's true that liberals ran a dirty, demagogic campaign last year against Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork. But that campaign was, in turn, modeled on techniques developed by conservatives. The origin of 1980s-style slimeball politics was the National Conservative Political Action Committee ("Nick-pac"—remember them?) effort that dislodged six liberal senators in 1980.

Like many, I feel I've shouted myself hoarse on the ridiculous subjects of prison furloughs and the Pledge of Allegiance. On both, the successful recipe was to find some obscure matter, subtly misrepresent it (the day before the election, the *Wall Street Journal* was still denouncing Dukakis's "furlough program . . . for mur-

continued on page 45

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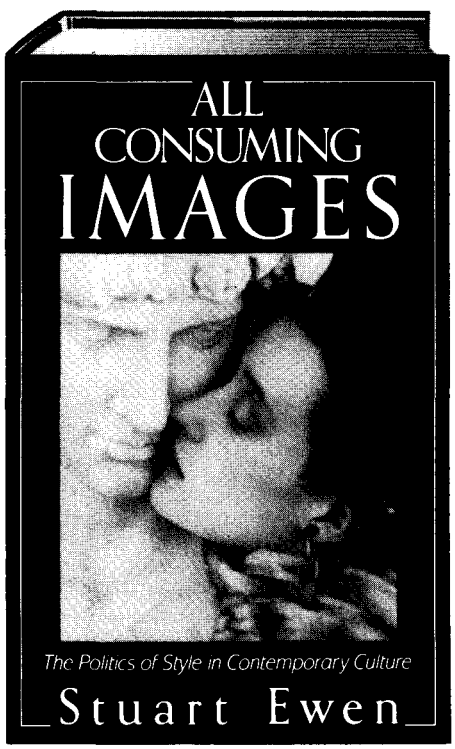

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
NOVEMBER 28, 1988

THE GLOBAL VISION THING

A recent survey found that nearly two-thirds of Americans have a favorable opinion of Mikhail Gorbachev. That put him ahead of every foreign leader except Margaret Thatcher. Had Michael Dukakis and George Bush been listed in the survey, he doubtless would have finished ahead of them, too. And with good reason. Gorbachev, more than either presidential candidate, has "the vision thing"—a clearly articulated view of where his nation, and the world, should be heading.

Gorbachev's national vision, of course, consists of *perestroika* and *glasnost*: the movement of the Soviet economic and political systems (respectively) away from rigid, top-down control toward the Western model of freedom. Gorbachev's global vision is a retread of former California Governor Jerry Brown's "spaceship earth" platform. Nations, Gorbachev notes, are increasingly faced with common problems that are best addressed internationally: environmental threats, terrorism, the cost of mutual military buildup, the prospect of nuclear apocalypse, or of economic apocalypse in a financially integrated world. Increasingly, we're all in the same boat. In technical parlance, this means nations are playing a "non-zero-sum game," in which the contestants can all win, if they cooperate, or all lose, if they don't.

Gorbachev is right. One of the simplest truths about international affairs is that over this century they have become more non-zero-sum. Similarly, there's no doubt that Gorbachev has correctly diagnosed the maladies of the Soviet economy: communism is an inherently unproductive economic system, and things look especially bleak for totalitarian communism in the information age, when prosperity depends on the diffuse distribution of potent information processing and transmitting machines.

The interesting questions aren't about Gorbachev's diagnoses, but about his prescriptions—their likely efficacy, his real motivations in espousing them, and the Western responses they call for. If reporters didn't so slavishly follow the rules of campaign discourse defined by television, these questions might have been addressed in depth by George Bush during his election campaign. Alas, they weren't. Yet they will persist. So, for his benefit, we offer this handy guide to questions that should have been much debated this fall.

1. *Is Gorbachev for real?* Yes. There is a virtual consensus that his reform program is much more than mere talk. Even Jeane Kirkpatrick has lately praised growing religious and intellectual freedom in the Soviet Union and suggested that the U.S.S.R. may be heading toward a promotion from totalitarian to authoritarian regime (no small step, in her lexicon).

Indeed, the new freedom of expression, while still far short of American standards, is in some ways dramatic enough to be puzzling. In the West, the initial take on *glasnost* was that it was entirely subordinate to *perestroika*; either Gorbachev thought (as many think) that some measure of political freedom is essential to fruitful economic freedom, or he was using free speech to woo the intelligentsia, or both. But it turns out that *glasnost* is keeping pace with, even outpacing, *perestroika*. To be sure, the Soviet steps toward a quasi-capitalistic economy sound more than tentative. Citizens are to be allowed to buy shares in industrial enterprises—a "stock market" is what the Soviet finance minister called the new system; Western capitalists will be allowed a controlling interest in joint ventures; and farmers, while still not allowed actually to own land, will be able to lease it for decades. But aspiring entrepreneurs still suffocate in red tape. And, most important, the Soviets have resisted the invisible hand itself: freely floating prices, which bring supply and demand into harmony.

2. *Will Gorbachev succeed*? If he does, he deserves a nice round of applause; this is one of the most ambitious projects in governance of this century. If he doesn't, the reason may lie in the aforementioned relationship between political and economic reform. Under the energizing influence of *glasnost*, restive masses in the Baltic states, Poland, and elsewhere are growing vocal enough to alarm Party reactionaries. Meanwhile, Gorbachev has no real economic progress with which to reassure these critics.

If he had it to do all over again, Gorbachev might take a page out of the Chinese book. China this decade has let

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political freedom grow, but hasn't let it become the main attraction; freer speech is merely a concomitant of economic freedom. The result has been a mixed success; production grew, but the transition from allocation by rationing to allocation by pricing naturally raised prices, and Chinese inflation now stands at around 50 percent. In response, the Chinese last month called time out and vowed not to get too caught up in Western ways. This is a setback for capitalism, but at least the Chinese got a taste of its fruits. Gorbachev, in contrast, already faces strong resistance, and he hasn't even approached the hurdle he must cross to reach lasting reform: the transition to a free pricing system—if possible, without politically crippling inflation.

The good news for Gorbachev is that the economy he inherited was a shambles. Even fidgety Party reactionaries know that dramatic change is needed, so he's likely to get more time for experimentation than was given to the last reformer, Nikita Khrushchev. And for all the signs of freer expression, and even some degree of pluralism, Gorbachev is craftily gathering power in his hands (to an extent that has made even some of his supporters worry about an institutionalized dictatorship). So he probably has a few more years to make *perestroika* work.

3. *Do we want Gorbachev to succeed?* Of all the important questions that didn't get asked in the two presidential debates, this one was begging most loudly for attention. The answer depends mainly on a question that has loomed large ever since World War II: What drives Soviet expansionism? Traditionally, many hard-liners have held that ideology is the driving force, while many doves have opted for the psychohistorical explanation about the long Russian history of territorial insecurity. So some die-hard hawks are now in a quandary; their preferred explanation places them in the uncomfortable position of rooting for Gorbachev's success. For if he succeeds in moving the Soviet Union as markedly toward economic and political freedom as he claims to want, then the East-West ideological difference that they consider the engine of Soviet expansionism will be much weakened.

One way hard-liners can wriggle out of this position is to assert that Gorbachev is just using *perestroika* and *glasnost* to let the Soviet Union catch its breath, and to lull the West to sleep, after which the old ways of communism, totalitarianism, and conquest will return (or, equivalently, that he'll get sacked by reactionaries). But even assuming that the Soviets could shift into reverse so easily, that would only exacerbate the basic tension that has forced Gorbachev into his present position; namely, it's hard to finance global conquest with an economic system as unproductive as communism. Since Yalta, the Soviet Union has done an impressive job of concealing this contradiction, but Mikhail Gorbachev is living testament to the difficulty of doing so indefinitely.

4. *Should we help Gorbachev?* This question is misleading. The issue, as most recently cast, is whether American banks should follow the lead of European banks and lend money to the Soviet Union—money with which it plans to obtain enough clothing and gadgets to pacify restless consumers until *perestroika* kicks in. But, so far as we know, the European countries whose banks are lending to the U.S.S.R. aren't trying to "help" Gorbachev in the sense of sacrificing for him. Their banks are lending to him for the same reason they lend to everyone else—because they think it will make them money. By the same logic, if our banks aren't permitted to make loans they want to make, then (assuming their judgment is good) they lose profits that, according to capitalist principles, are good for our own economy as a whole. So the question, rightly stated, is whether we want to sacrifice some prosperity to make things harder on Gorbachev.

The answer is maybe. It might make sense to deny the Soviets credit in order to force them to decide between guns and butter. Or, instead, we might just threaten to withhold credit until Gorbachev agrees, say, to reduce support of the Sandinistas. Either way, U.S. credit would be proportional to the Soviets' abandonment of expansionism (of which there are already signs, but only faint signs). The countervailing concern, of course, is that forcing conspicuous concessions out of Gorbachev might sabotage *perestroika* by weakening his political base. In the end, the question may be moot; Western Europe is so eager to deal with the Soviets that U.S. leverage is likely to become too small to agonize over. In any event, the government certainly shouldn't coerce banks into providing sweetheart deals for Gorbachev.

5. *Does Gorbachev really believe his own spaceship earth rhetoric?* Whether he does or not, much of the world seems to, and he has exploited this fact brilliantly. Indeed, for all the Reagan administration's foreign policy triumphs (notably in upping the price of Soviet expansion, thereby heightening the contradiction between a communist economy and an expensive empire), Reagan suffered a historic lapse in surrendering the center stage of world opinion to Gorbachev. He has tried to mount a comeback by sounding kinder, gentler, and more like Jerry Brown. (Recently, for example, he endorsed the use of the World Court—not an institution he has always paid homage to—to resolve some U.S.-Soviet disputes.) But there's more work to be done on the global p.r. front.

George Bush must recapture the leadership of international opinion, recognizing (*a*) that the people of the world love to think of themselves as being fellow passengers on a giant spaceship; and (*b*) that in many ways they really are. Through dramatic proposals for making the planet less tense, he can win friends, influence people, and find out whether Mikhail Gorbachev truly is a reasonable man, as opposed to merely a clever one. Would Gorbachev, for example, pull Soviet soldiers out of Eastern European countries in exchange for a partial withdrawal of American troops from Western Europe? How about a conventional arms pact that—unlike past nuclear arms treaties—would actually save both sides some money? How about clearer rules of the road to circumvent future military entanglements in the Third World? Bush perfunctorily alluded to questions like this during the campaign, but he didn't sound as if he had lost any sleep over them. He shouldn't get to the next election the same way. □

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NOTEBOOK

□ RATHER PHONY: On election night, the television networks once again performed what is widely perceived to be their patriotic duty to deceive the American people. As usual, the anchormen, reporters, and commentators all had exit poll results that told them the probable outcome in most states. And as usual, they kept this information to themselves and filled the airtime with phony suspense. The rationale for this bizarre self-denying ritual is threefold: first, that reporting the probable result deprives people who haven't voted yet (especially in the West) of their right of citizenship; second, that it unfairly penalizes the losing candidate by discouraging his or her potential voters; third, that exit polls are unreliable. But the first point is nothing but a superstition; every vote is equally important—or more accurately, unimportant—irrespective of when it is cast. On point two, this year's election night is actually a counterexample. If Dukakis supporters in California and other Western states knew—as the network commentators knew but didn't say—that the race was somewhat tighter than people had predicted, they might have rallied around. Instead, many of them probably saw the sea of Eastern Bush states on the network maps and didn't bother to vote. As for point three, the networks *do* rely on exit polls to predict the result anyway. How else do you suppose they call the winner 30 seconds after the polls close in each state? The networks are not at fault. This silly game is imposed on them by high-minded outsiders. But it's ridiculous nonetheless, and it would be refreshing if one of them would refuse to go along.

□ PROUD ALL OVER:

I'm a Liberal, And Proud of It

By Leonard Bernstein

—*New York Times*, October 30

MARY McGRORY

A Liberal And Proud Of It

—*Washington Post*, same day

(thanks to Robert Andrews, Arlington, Virginia)

□ THE TRUTHS OF TAWANA: The fact that Tawana Brawley was not raped and smeared with what newspapers like to call "feces" by four white men, including a policeman, has broken the *Nation*'s bleeding heart. Its October 31 issue contains an article arguing that "the case cannot be measured by legal canons." Alerting us to its deeper meanings, the author, Stanley Diamond, Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and the Humanities at the New School for Social Research, announces that "in cultural perspective, if not in fact, it doesn't matter whether the crime occurred or not." In other words, the truth "doesn't matter." So you now have sanction, if you wish, to gnash your teeth over the failure of "white justice," whatever that means, to arrest and jail Brawley's Anglo-Saxon tormentors, even if they do not exist, for committing a crime that nobody committed. For what did not happen to Brawley is a "model of what actually happens to too many black women." Many black women? While the author does not quite suggest that gang rape by white supremacists is a common experience for black women, he does treat the Brawley case as a plausible expression of "the reality of black experience, including the contemporary wave of racism and disadvantage that stretches from the grim black ghettoes to the mean white streets of Howard Beach, Queens." The reasoning is goofy, and repugnant, and a disgrace to those associated with its promulgation. But the legal authorities are so fearful of the emotional power of this kind of logic that they probably will not indict attorneys Alton Maddox and C. Vernon Mason and Rev. Al Sharpton for the obstructions of justice they so joyfully and recklessly perpetrated. And the silence of black leadership—the silent complicity of Jesse Jackson, even of Bill Cosby, who gave money to the Brawley defense fund—is even more deplorable than the passivity of the district attorney. If *they* do not insist on the truth about their community, why should anybody else?

□ THE LAWRENCE COLLECTION: TNR is pleased to offer its readers the catalog from the latest showing of the political drawings of contributing editor Vint Lawrence. For those of you who have long admired Vint's work (see cover, pages 29 and 42), this is a chance to enjoy highlights from the past eight years in a handsome volume signed by the artist. Buyers should send TNR a check for $22.95 ($19.95 plus $3.00 to cover shipping and handling).

□ HEROES ARE HARD TO FIND: When the U.S. Army School of the Americas decided to establish a Hall of Fame for graduates "who have achieved military and civilian prominence," it left out Panama's Manuel Antonio Noriega—one of the 50,000 Latin American military officers trained by the school. But it made up for that lapse, according to a recent story in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, by honoring three men with similarly distinguished records: Bolivia's Gen. Hugo Banzer Suarez, former Honduran armed forces head Maj. Gen. Policarpo Paz Garcia, and Paz's successor, Gen. Humberto Regalado Hernandez. General Banzer was the military dictator of Bolivia who provided Klaus Barbie with a safe haven, a bodyguard, and a diplomatic passport. Major General Paz, meanwhile, was at times kept locked in his bedroom during his brief presidency by colleagues worried about his behavior (though he managed to escape on at least one occasion to a local brothel). And last February the *Los Angeles Times* reported that General Regalado—whose half-brother was later arrested for allegedly trying to smuggle 26 pounds of cocaine into the United States—was suspected by U.S. officials of protecting Colombian drug-runners.

□ OLIVE BRANCH:

"American Airlines trimmed $100,000 from its annual overhead merely by eliminating one olive from each

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salad." —*U.S. News and World Report*, October 31

"A suggestion by a flight attendant that the airline use one olive instead of two in first-class salads has been worth $40,000 a year."—*Newsweek*, same date.

(thanks to Kenneth T. Colbert, Memphis, Tennessee)

□ HOT AIR:

Natural Gas Prices Rise While Surplus Dwindles

—*New York Times*, November 3, page D1

No Rise Seen in Natural Gas Prices

—same paper! same day! same page!

(thanks to Stephen Chapman, Chicago, Illinois)

□ THE MARY MCCARTHY REVIEW OF BOOKS: This office has received the following communication from the director of publicity at Viking Press. "Dear Editor," it began:

> An overzealous member of my department mistakenly pasted the exact same Mary McCarthy quote on two separate novels we're publishing next March. McCarthy *did* call the Dutch writer Harry Mulisch's new novel, LAST CALL, "a dazzling piece of work, sometimes crystal-clear, sometimes mystifying—stupendous." She did not say this about Janet Appleton's charming first novel, THAT SUMMER."

□ EXCHANGE PROGRAM:

> THIS MONTH'S *Pravda International* carries the *Pravda* profile of George Dukakis, the Democratic candidate for the 41st presidency of the USA.

—*Pravda International*, October 1988

(thanks to Robert G. Haiman, Amherst, Massachusetts)

□ FOR RICHER, FOR POORER:

Prosperity Eludes Grenada 5 Years After Invasion

—*Washington Post*, October 25

5 Years Later, Grenada Is Tranquil and Thriving

—*New York Times*, October 23

(thanks to several readers)

□ END OF AN ERA: With this issue, senior editor Charles Krauthammer moves down the masthead to contributing editor, signaling his shift from full-time staff member to occasional (and we hope frequent) contributor. Charles first wrote for TNR in 1979, when he was still making his living as a psychiatrist, and joined the staff two years later and won us a National Magazine Award for his essays not too long afterward. He has gone on to glory as a Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for the *Washington Post* and an essayist for *Time* magazine. We are proud to have escorted this formidable journalistic presence onto the national stage.

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

NOW WHAT?

GEORGE BUSH is no Ronald Reagan. What Reagan said during his race for the White House set the tone for his ideological presidency. But the issues Bush rubbed raw during his campaign—Willie Horton, the death penalty, the ACLU, the Pledge of Allegiance—are irrelevant to the way he intends to govern as president. In Bush's case, his actions speak louder than his words.

Rather than being confrontational and ideological, Bush will be conciliatory, tentative, and accommodating. That's the way he really is, after all. More often than not, Bush took the course of least resistance in the campaign, or at least what he thought was the safest course, personally and politically. Take the selection of Dan Quayle as his vice president. Quayle was the one guy on his list of veep possibilities who made no one mad. (OK, the voters maybe, but that came later.) Bob Dole and Jack Kemp were anathema to Bush as hated rivals. Richard Thornburgh and Alan Simpson were pro-choice on abortion and thus unacceptable to the Republican right. So Bush passed over all four and picked Quayle, the man without enemies. It was the easy choice.

Or take his exploitation of Michael Dukakis's gubernatorial record. Bush was putty in the hands of his strategists. They thought Willie Horton, the Pledge, etc., would be potent issues in the effort to portray Dukakis as a dangerous liberal. Bush tried these issues out. Once they clicked, he stuck with them as a basic theme of his campaign. He could have put more stress on larger economic or foreign policy issues. He could have talked up Reagan's two favorites, Star Wars and the *contras*. But he didn't. Instead he went along with the advice of his handlers. Even in his press conference the morning after Election Day, he fudged on the *contras*.

Or take Bush's finishing kick in the campaign. He had a choice between boldness and caution. The bold approach was to go for a broad mandate—more than just "no new taxes"—and also come to the aid of struggling Republican congressional candidates. But being bold meant taking risks. He would have had to talk specifically about what he wants as president, what programs he'd cut, what kind of judges he'd appoint, what he'd do in Central America. He would have had to appear in states peripheral to his own campaign. The cautious approach required Bush to forget about a real mandate, talk airily of his "vision" for America, and continue to pound Dukakis as a hapless liberal. This option limited Bush's field of action to a few battleground states—if he neutralized Dukakis in those states, he'd win. It left Republican Senate candidates to take care of themselves. Bush decided to worry about himself first, and only. He opted for caution.

Bush's campaign decisions, not his overheated rhetoric, foreshadow his presidency. That's my guess at any rate.

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Bush aims to please. He's flexible and responds to pressure. He scarcely has the beginnings of an agenda of his own, though he vowed at his press conference to come up with "a 100 days' game plan." Don't get your hopes up. In the White House, Bush will be a fellow in search of a compromise. His message to Capitol Hill is almost plaintive. "I'll do my utmost to reach out and work constructively with the Congress," he said in his acceptance speech on election night.

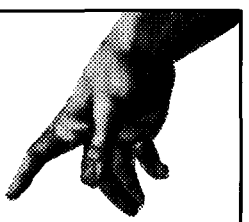
The contrast with Reagan in 1980 is striking. Reagan is an ideological conservative. He believes what he says. Bush is a conservative only in temperament. To him, much of what was said on the stump amounted to mere campaign chatter, politically useful but not holy writ. Reagan had stumped on specific themes—lower taxes, spending cuts, a military buildup—and he was committed to them. He claimed a mandate and his message to Congress was: take it or leave it. Rather than pursue compromise, he overpowered Democrats in Congress, who were shellshocked by GOP gains across the board in 1980.

Bush faces bitter and probably unrelenting opposition on Capitol Hill. For one thing, both houses are controlled by Democrats, who picked up two Senate and five House seats. (Reagan had a GOP Senate for six years.) And congressional Democrats are hardly in awe of Bush or even afraid of him in the slightest. On the contrary, Democratic leaders are ready to bulldoze Bush and take charge of the national agenda. Their appetites were whetted by the last two years in which Reagan, neutralized by Iranamok, had to swallow virtually everything they gave him, including mandatory 60-day notification to workers of plant closings.

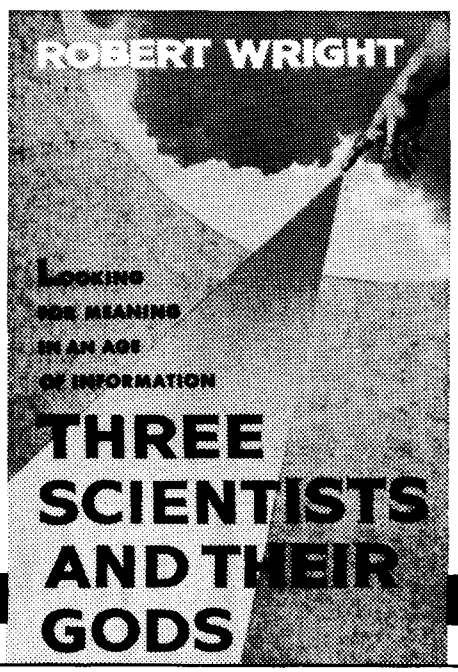
Weeks before the campaign ended, Democrats began engaging Bush in combat. He waged a nasty, sleazeball campaign against Dukakis, they charged. Their purpose was to deny Bush a honeymoon as president, and they may have pulled this off. What's more, it wasn't only Democratic crazies in Congress who made the anti-Bush argument. Solid citizens like Senator Bill Bradley joined in. Bradley publicly questioned whether Bush would have the moral standing to govern after brutalizing Dukakis. "Bush has no mandate," Bradley declared. "He ran on very little and Congress will control the legislative and political agenda."

Bush has two more problems in Congress. The first is the backlog of initiatives that most Democrats and some Republicans would love to pass. "There is now at least ten years of pent-up demand in Congress for an array of new spending initiatives," said Washington consultant David Smick. Many issues were deferred by the last Con-

"A SMASHING DEBUT...



If you've never read a whole science book through at one sitting, *Three Scientists and Their Gods* may change that. . . In format, tone, and panache, Wright's book takes popular science literature where few such enterprises have gone before." —Carlin Romano, *Philadelphia Inquirer*



"Makes entropy as absorbing as a gossip column. . . Mr. Wright is a master of the intellectual profile." —George Sim Johnston, *Wall Street Journal*

"A gold mine and a mine field of ideas." —Dan Calef, *San Francisco Chronicle*

"A lucid book about complex ideas. . . Wright brings his considerable skill in writing and depth of thought to bear on these three profiles, which are as good as they come." —Lee Dembart, *Los Angeles Times*

"[*Three Scientists and Their Gods*] is what devotees of Hunter S. Thompson might consider gonzo science writing, in which author becomes anti-hero on a mythological quest. With the bemused detachment of the skeptical inquirer, Wright turns his encounters into masterly portraits of three eccentric thinkers. . . They are perfect foils for Mr. Wright in his 'periodic attempts to find evidence that life is not devoid of meaning.'" —George Johnson, *The New York Times Book Review*

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gress—a hike in the minimum wage, health insurance and long-term care, parental leave, child care, an increase in spending for education, environmental enforcement, etc. Then there's the deficit. If Bush holds a budget summit with Congress—which he wants—he'll be pressured to raise taxes. Democrats in Congress aren't about to sign off on significant domestic spending cuts unless he agrees to higher taxes, perhaps through new loophole closings or new sin taxes. This puts Bush in a dilemma. On the one hand, he stands to get a budget compromise. On the other, he'd have to renege on his unequivocal campaign promise not to raise taxes.

The final problem is Senate Republican leader Bob Dole, who's been publicly contemptuous of Bush. On election night, Dole was asked in a TV interview about what's on Congress's plate in 1989. He said the deficit and health care. That's what you might have expected him to say if Dukakis had won. And Dole zinged Bush for not having done enough to elect Republicans to the Senate, especially Connie Mack in Florida. At his press conference, Bush made a halfhearted peace overture to Dole. "Definitely I'll want to meet with him," he said. He made it sound about as enticing as a trip to the dentist.

Maybe James Baker can help Bush with Congress and Dole. He's set to be the dominant force among Bush advisers. Bush announced Baker's nomination as secretary of state on day one of the transition. He named no other nominees. Baker's strength in the Bush administration will be threefold. He is Bush's most trusted friend and political adviser. He will be the senior figure in the Bush Cabinet. And his associates will be stashed throughout the adminstration. For instance, Richard Darman, Baker's deputy at the Reagan White House and while Baker was treasury secretary, is slated to become budget director. All this will make Baker an unusual secretary of state, one with his hand in domestic policy and political affairs. Eat your heart out, Henry Kissinger. Expect stories about Baker as the deputy president to crop up shortly after Inauguration Day.

Bush may already be taking lessons from Baker on getting along with the press. After the election, he extolled the reporters who'd covered his race. They reported "beautifully," Bush said, and he made a point of calling most of them by their first names at his postelection press conference. But Bush has a better chance of getting along with Dole than he does with Washington reporters.

With some exceptions, reporters don't like Bush and he doesn't like them. Part of the Bush lore, known by everyone in the press, is the story of a political aide's advice four years ago. Reagan had just been re-elected, and Bush was starting to think about his own presidential bid in 1988. The adviser told Bush candidly that his relations with the press were lousy. He barely had any friends at all among reporters, which was bad. During rocky periods in his campaign, he'd be sure to need some reporters who'd give his side of things a sympathetic airing.

Bush listened attentively. The adviser went on to say that Bush ought to start schmoozing with a few selected journalists. He could invite them to off-the-record lunches and give them inside dope on how he saw the campaign shaping up. All most reporters want is a little access and a tidbit of information here and there. When the adviser finished, Bush gave his answer instantly. "Screw 'em," he said. Now, as president-elect, he's decided to woo them.

FRED BARNES

Two battles for the new administration.

BUSH WARFARE

ALTHOUGH HE DEVOTED most of his presidential campaign to name-calling, George Bush did manage quietly to put two worthwhile items on his national security agenda: the concept of "competitive strategies" as a way to plan the nation's defenses rationally, and the resumption of military aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*. Both items will take some doing. Competitive strategies is already encountering resistance from the military services, which prefer the old more-of-everything approach to weapons-buying. Aid to the *contras*, as always, will be opposed by most Democrats in Congress, so Bush will have to figure out some imaginative way to keep pressure on the Sandinistas.

Bush endorsed the competitive strategies concept in an October 17 speech in Denver, declaring it "as American as apple pie . . . just plain common sense applied to our military problems." Indeed, when newspapers and the newsmagazines get around to making the idea a public policy buzzword, most citizens will wonder why we haven't already been doing what competitive strategies calls for: targeting the weak spots in Soviet strategies and capabilities.

Traditionally, though—and especially during the seven-year tenure of Caspar Weinberger as secretary of defense—strategy of any kind has had little to do with defense planning. Weinberger sought (and, at first, got) hundreds of billions of dollars from Congress and basically just gave it to the military services to spend on programs they liked: more ships, more planes, more guns. To the extent there was a method to the spending, it was to counter Soviet numerical strengths, not weaknesses.

The "competitive strategies" alternative was originated in 1972 by an unassuming genius, Andrew Marshall, whose low-budget Office of Net Assessment is located in windowless quarters in the no-status "A" Ring of the Pentagon, far from the prestigious outer "E" Ring. Ironically, it took Graham Allison, dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard and later a campaign adviser to Michael Dukakis (but also a consultant to Weinberger), to get the idea officially considered in 1986. Since then, it's been exhaustively studied and war-gamed, partly in response to legislation sponsored by none other than Senator

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Dan Quayle. It's been endorsed in principle by Senate Armed Services Chairman Sam Nunn and ranking Republican John Warner, and Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci has provisionally ordered it as the basis of fiscal 1990 NATO conventional-force budgeting.

CONTROVERSY WILL COME, according to advocates of the strategy, when the new administration and Congress actually get around to deciding what weapons to buy. Planes, ships, and tanks—which traditionally have created career-advancement opportunities for officers in the armed services—will have to give way to expensive, high-tech cruise missiles, remotely controlled pilotless planes, super-accurate "smart" artillery shells, and mundane devices such as long-range artillery, land mines, and tank ditches designed to blunt a Soviet attack.

Everyone's favorite example of the ideal competitive strategies weaponry is "stealth" aircraft—a creation of the Carter administration—which will render useless the Soviet Union's enormously expensive existing air defense system and force vast expenditures on a new one. Reagan's SDI program could prove a shrewd competitive strategies move if it forces the Soviet Union to dismantle its first-strike nuclear capability in an arms agreement. The idea behind the entire concept is that military planners would outfox the Soviets, rather than trying to match them weapon for weapon.

"Concepts are a dime a dozen at the Pentagon," one competitive strategies advocate said. "But when Bush said, 'I like this concept,' it scared the shit out of the Joint Chiefs. They liked the status quo of decentralized budgets and the lack of coherent planning. Now, they're saying, 'Oh, my God, the civilians are going to raid the 1990 budget.' " The service chiefs, who actually have to lead the way in fighting wars when they happen, presumably will make a strong case that numbers of weapons really do count in warfare, especially in Soviet doctrine.

Members of Congress with production plants in their districts will listen to this argument sympathetically. Thereafter, every threatened system will be justified as part of the competitive strategies concept. So Bush will need to stick to his commitment, and he will also have to be discriminating about it. There is no money to waste; in fact, defense experts estimate that between $250 billion and $350 billion has to be cut from currently obligated defense spending over the next five years to meet the zero-growth targets that Congress and the Reagan administration seem agreed upon. Bush never explained during the campaign which weapons systems will have to go. After January 20, he has to have that figured out.

Even before January 20, he should say how he plans to proceed with the *contras*. Ten months after Congress stopped military aid for the second time, 10,000 of them, plus 40,000 family members, are now sitting idle in camps in the Honduras—"not demoralized," says *contra* spokesman Bosco Metamoros, "but frustrated by the lack of consistency in the United States, and the imbalance of support that the Sandinistas are getting from the Soviet Union." Bush said just once during the campaign—in an interview with the right-wing *Washington Times*—that he "absolutely" would go back to Congress next year with a request for renewed military aid, but he clearly did not seek a mandate for it, and his remarks on the subject at his first press conference as president-elect were weak and ambiguous.

Some *contra* supporters fear that Bush might go to Congress for an up-or-down vote on military aid, lose it, and then opt for a policy of "containment" of the Sandinistas. This would never work in Central America as in Europe, they say, because of the region's porous borders, and it would be so expensive (perhaps $1 billion per year in military and economic aid to neighboring countries) that Congress would not sustain it. They also say that building up the Salvadoran and Honduran military would not serve the cause of democracy.

The containment option is being attributed to a Bush campaign adviser named Richard Haass, a former Reagan State Department official now teaching at Harvard who has been rumored as a candidate for the job of assistant secretary of state for Latin America. Haass said in an interview that his preferred option is not containment, but renewed military aid. But if Congress won't approve it, he said, the new administration might have to settle for humanitarian aid to keep the *contras* alive, and might have to practice containment along with other strategies until Sandinista misbehavior proved to Congress that military aid should be restored. He said that the additional strategies would include maximum political pressure on the Sandinistas to open their system to democratic reform.

AN ALTERNATIVE strategy was recommended to both Bush and Dukakis by a working group assembled by Freedom House, calling for "a new and more rigorous test" of the Arias peace plan during the first three months of the new administration—after which, if the Sandinistas once again failed to live up to their promises of democratization, the administration presumably could seek renewed military aid. During the test period, Central American nations would be asked to mount an "intrusive" inspection program to monitor Sandinista progress toward democratization, and observers from other countries also would be encouraged to visit.

"We'd like to see as many people in Nicaragua during this period as there were in Chile during the election there," said Penn Kemble, coordinator of the working group. The group called for similar monitoring of conditions in El Salvador to ensure that left-wing dissidents and guerrillas willing to enter peaceful politics were not menaced by right-wing death squads. In place of current humanitarian aid to the *contras*, the report suggests providing "political development aid" designed to prepare the *contras* to engage in political activity if and when they were able to return to Nicaragua.

In fact, there is only a small chance that any new try at the Arias plan would work. There is that chance because the Nicaraguan economy has fallen further into shambles

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THE MEDLEY INTERVIEW:

"TRUTH IS THE TEST"

In keeping with what has become a long-standing Washington tradition, syndicated columnist J. William Medley was the first journalist to be granted an interview with President-elect George Bush. Medley is the dean of the Washington press corps, recipient of many honorary degrees, and winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary, the Robert F. Kennedy Humanitarian Award, and the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Society of Thoughtful Observers. His syndicated column, "The View From Here," appears in 325 papers around the world. For many years he chaired the weekly television discussion show "Medley and Friends," recently supplanted by vulgar imitators. Medley is president emeritus of the Opinion League of America, and chairman of the Third Millennium Study Group of the American Association of Syndicated Columnists (AFL-CIO). One testimony to Medley's influence is that Newsweek *recently swiped the original title of his column, "Conventional Wisdom," for its own column of political punditry. After receiving the president-elect, Medley filed this exclusive report for* TNR.

George Herbert Walker Bush, looking tanned and fit, chatted with me informally in the VCR Room of the vice president's mansion on Washington's stately, embassy-lined Massachusetts Avenue. There's no question Bush is a changed man these days. His jaunty step, his confident smile, his new-found wit, remind more than a few old-timers of a young fellow named John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

In the clear, crisp autumn weather, one could sense a new mood in the nation's capital, a mood that perhaps extended outside the Beltway that rings this provincial town. In these days of decision and change, there seems to be a bipartisan desire to rise above the divisions and bitterness of the hard-fought campaign—a desire to come together as a people. The president-elect made clear to me his own personal desire to move ahead rather than look back.

Mr. Bush leaned back in his chair and opened himself to questions. He exuded the confidence of a warrior who had proved his mettle in the heat of battle. Yet he also showed that "kinder, gentler" side of which he spoke in his New Orleans acceptance speech. Many observers have detected a new and more mature George Bush in the days since the election. A man who realizes he must bring all Americans—from Willie Horton to Cliff Barnes—together. He knows it won't be easy.

Mr. Bush said he shares the widespread disgust of many Americans at the way the recently concluded campaign was conducted. "I think things were said in the campaign that I now regret," Mr. Bush said. "There were excesses on both sides. I am giving serious thought to appointing a Bipartisan Commission on Negative Campaigning." Some have called the president-elect a wimp, but on this issue he sounded grimly determined. "We must clean up this scourge once and for all," he said.

The American people have given Bush a mandate for divided government. Will he be able to lead? The conventional wisdom is undecided. Some are saying that the new president has what it takes to prevail in the rough-and-tumble politics of this cynical city. Other well-informed sources say that Bush has good intentions but no Teflon. "Are there any easy answers for George Bush?" asks political scientist Norman J. Ornstein. "Only time will tell."

The new commander in chief prefers to look to the challenges of the future. Bush seems poised to make the tough decisions on the problems of the 1990s. Yet the president-elect is also likely to sidestep any issue that threatens his fragile mandate. The American people are watching and waiting, hopeful yet pessimistic.

Bush is emphasizing these days that his administration will be a break with the past. "The people want change," he shrewdly observed, "without sacrificing continuity." His will be a Cabinet-style government in which key decisions will be made collectively. "All senior officials will be consulted, with the natural exception of the vice president." But he acknowledges that "in the end, just one guy takes the heat, and you're looking at him." The president-elect wants to do a better job of consulting with Congress while still exercising the kind of strong presidential leadership that the American people yearn for.

One key early test of Bush's divided mandate is the defense budget. Bush vows to cut out the fat and keep the muscle. Such measures are perhaps necessary given the excesses of the Weinberger years. But there is less fat at the Pentagon than is commonly thought, though more than Bush usually acknowledges.

On the federal deficit, Bush revealed a refreshing realism and sophistication. "We're obviously going to have to raise taxes, aren't we?" he said.

At the end of the interview, Bush looked out his window, as if searching for the great nation that has entrusted its future to him. "I expect you guys in the press to be tough as heck on me," the president-elect said. "Just as long as you're responsible about it. Truth is the test."

Extremists of the left and right may carp, but this reporter, who has seen many a president come and go, came away with renewed respect for this man—and for the office he will assume. Whether we voted for Bush or Dukakis, it seems incumbent on us, as journalists and as Americans, to wish him well as he embarks on the long twilight struggle.

J. WILLIAM MEDLEY

Jefferson Morley, a former research assistant to J. William Medley and currently Washington editor of the *Nation*, contributed to this article.

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and the Sandinistas have become more unpopular than ever. If their Central American neighbors forced them to release imprisoned opposition leaders and open political activity to returning *contras*, enough popular agitation might take place to split the Sandinista leadership, and the dominant faction might permit free elections.

The far likelier prospect is that Sandinista weakness would lead to even more repression of the type that has occurred since *contra* aid was cut off. At least, under the Freedom House formula, it would be fully exposed and a bipartisan case could be built for *contra* aid. With a good-faith push for democracy and a team of advisers different from those of the Reagan administration, Bush has a chance to build a national consensus on Central America policy. He has the same chance at consensus on defense policy, as well. But he did not give himself a head start toward bipartisanship by throwing mud at Michael Dukakis.

MORTON M. KONDRACKE

Part personality, part ideology.

WHY DUKAKIS LOST

THE *Washington Post* could not conscientiously endorse any presidential candidate this year. A reader of the *New York Times* could not tell until the very end of its labored editorial, "Two Good Men," which one the editors were about to recommend. As many TNR readers have noted, our own endorsement of the Democratic ticket was, as the Talmud puts it in a gloss on the story of the Jewish holiday Purim, "not out of love of Mordechai but out of repugnance for Haman." Only one of our senior staff was ever genuinely enthusiastic about the prospect of a Michael Dukakis presidency, and his enthusiasm was frail and tattered by Election Day. Given the generally dispirited attitude toward the Democratic nominee among such habitual Democratic advocates, the rejection of Dukakis by the less committed populace is no surprise. This election was a disaster, and it is scarce consolation for me to be able to say, as I can, "I told you so."

Broadly speaking there are two explanations for the popular rebuff of Michael Dukakis. The first involves the person of the aspirant. The second is ideological, focusing on how the candidate and his party describe the American present and what they prescribe for the American future. Some people denigrate the first factor, preferring to see it as "merely personal." This derisive formulation lets the candidate off the hook too easily and encourages his partisans to treat his weaknesses as positive attributes. Thus, his inability to inspire is read as a refusal to pander. Marvin Kalb told a Harvard audience a few days before the election that Dukakis was too principled to win. This is nonsense: Dukakis is no more a stranger to the political gutter than his opponents, either in his gubernatorial runs or in his race for the presidency.

As a Massachusetts voter I've watched Dukakis closely for more than a quarter century. (Once, years ago, in a galaxy far away, he and I debated U.S. Cuba policy. I was the left-wing critic. Dukakis defended the Kennedy administration hard-line, a view to which he was committed as a Brookline pol, and he did it with the same hauteur we are all now accustomed to in Dukakis's foreign affairs pronouncements.) Dukakis is just not an engaging individual. But what some might grudgingly call personality failings, meaning by the phrase some superficial flaws, I'd call character defects.

These were amply evident during the campaign. When asked during the second debate to name a living hero, Dukakis couldn't come up with a single name. This is evidence of a stunning narcissism. Here is a man so self-contained, so smug (or is it that he is so without confidence?) that he feels no need and no capacity to have others to respect. One gets the sense, in fact, that he is his own hero. So scornful was he of his primary opponents and of Bush that when they questioned him pointedly about one or another aspect of his Massachusetts record, his ready retort was "get your facts straight." It's a reflex with him; he is not to be questioned or submitted to scrutiny. But sometimes his questioners did have their facts straight—about the furlough program for non-parolable felons and also about the dreadful state of commonwealth finances. And when this became clear, Dukakis's snippy rejoinders (as opposed to the substantive rebuttals he might have made in each case) seemed imperious, falsely imperious at that. His refusal to admit error or even fallibility made Dukakis seem implausible—not just as a president but simply as a person one might want to talk to. This is the deeper meaning of Bush's higher scores in the various affability polls. The fact is that to know Dukakis—to know him even from afar—is to dislike him. That is one reason it seemed for a while that even Massachusetts could slip into the Bush column, and why millions had to be spent on radio and television to keep it Democratic.

The campaign itself was an insular enterprise, headquartered not in Washington but in Boston, run by Bostonians even outside of Boston. George McGovern's narrowly directed crusade in 1972 was less insular. A heavy political price is paid for such inward-looking ventures. But this cutoff quality of the Dukakis campaign is an expression and an extension of Dukakis's own character. He trusts no one but those who have proved their fealty to him. So he did not even court those who had backed his Democratic primary antagonists. In this we had an augury of how parochial a Dukakis administration might have been. We also have an explanation for the long-time acrimony between the governor and the Democratic legislature.

Dukakis's choice for running mate, Lloyd Bentsen, is now widely seen as the most respected of the four national candidates. This is another instance not of how high the mountain, but of how low the valley. Lest a false legend grow, it should be remembered that this sleekly avuncular

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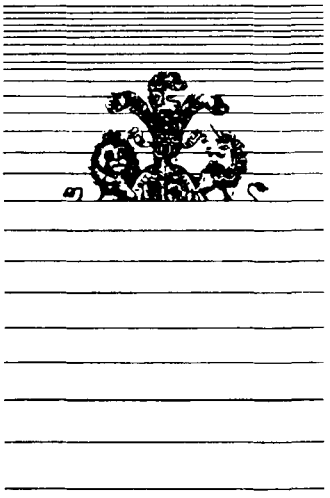

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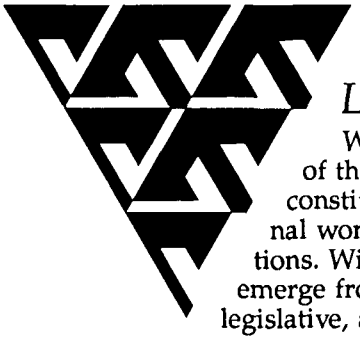

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messenger of the big interests to the Senate Finance Committee did not even meet the one specific requirement of his assignment: he did not win Texas, let alone any other Southern state. Dukakis had some more formidable options. John Glenn at least would have won him Ohio. Al Gore would have won him the border states and given him a shot at some Southern and Western states besides. But Dukakis, like Bush, chose someone he thought would not overshadow him. In the end, Bentsen even did that. Of course, Dukakis pretended in and after Atlanta that Bentsen had qualities. Dukakis, not Quayle, was the first to play the preposterous analogies game by claiming that Bentsen was Lyndon Johnson to his own JFK. Bentsen, of course, is no LBJ. And Dukakis is no Kennedy.

The Democratic Party can easily relieve itself of the personal ineptitude with which Dukakis ran his campaign. Presumably the Democratic candidate next time around need not be a tight little snip like Dukakis, humorless, whining, ungenerous, murky in program, dreary in rhetoric. But it's far from clear that the Democrats will be able to emancipate themselves from those freely chosen ideological fetters that so confined Dukakis and the national party, and that, in fact, guaranteed their defeat. Voices are already heard reproaching the Democrats for not having marched far enough left in this election. They hold out the chimera of seven or eight or ten million non-voters (any number will do) who are just waiting to respond to a party that will practice more believably the politics of class and race resentment. It is less an analysis than religion. Its chief preacher, and beneficiary, is Jesse Jackson.

Almost any reporter who has traveled this campaign will tell you that the popular memory of the Jackson convention haunted the Dukakis effort till the end. Most Americans simply do not recognize their own country in Jackson's hyperbolic polemics. Some of them, of course, are repelled by him for racist reasons, and might otherwise be taken by his politics of resentment. But the convention sticks in the people's consciousness not only as the apotheosis of Jesse Jackson but as the culmination of a primary campaign during which the ultimate winner said again and again he had not many fundamental differences with Jesse Jackson. The Democrats seem to believe that they can wage their pre-convention battles in one country with one agenda and then carry on their fight against the Republicans as if in another country and with a wholly different agenda. It can't be done.

In this regard the Democrats had with Michael Dukakis the worst of all worlds. Coming out of the overwrought and highly charged leftish ideological atmosphere of the primaries, Dukakis abruptly tried to shift to the becalming message of competence. This assumed that the voters would forget that Dukakis's operative rule in the pre-convention period was "no enemies to the left." (The only candidate of whom this cannot be said is Al Gore.) Competence is a theme you can actually imagine drone-like Dukakis droning on about for months. It may even inspire him. But it is a feeble electoral strategy. So when the Bush campaign forced Dukakis back into his liberal moorings, it also seemed to rescue the Democratic nominee by giving him something politically salient to say.

BUT THERE ARE many liberal speeches and Dukakis felt comfortable giving only one or two of them. Democrats did not have much of an incentive to challenge the Republicans on foreign policy. The state of our relations with the Soviets alone precluded that. There was a limit to how much even a desperate candidate could make out of Noriega, and Dukakis exceeded the limit early on. Speaking honestly about our precarious economy also had its pitfalls. But bravery would have done better than cowardice, yet Dukakis was not brave. Dukakis was, then, obliged—competence aside—to speak on what he cares about. And one idea he cares deeply about is the doctrine of rights liberalism. He never seemed more at ease than when he was explicating his narrow legalistic reasons for vetoing the Pledge of Allegiance legislation in Massachusetts. In the hothouse of Brookline and Cambridge it can sometimes seem to a rising politician that the rights of felons is a high-priority issue. And maybe it should be. But we are now, as liberals, inventing rights, ever more rights, precisely when it is clear that this profusion of rights—the rights of the insane not to be in mental institutions, the rights of children not to adhere to norms at school—is precisely what has put so many of our people and society itself at risk. Liberalism used to be a vision of justice; it has increasingly become, outside the economic sphere, the dogma of those who want to do as they damn well please.

In our endorsement editorial we said that Michael Dukakis "more closely represents a true 'postliberal' " ideal. In comparison to Bush, he does. But Dukakis still tried to appease the wholesale redistributionist impulse in the party, and did so with the soul and the techniques of a certified public accountant. The Democrats have got to realize that there is no way to maintain intact the farm and factory sectors of our society. Indeed, there is something reactionary in the Democrats (with Third World interlocutor Jesse Jackson most egregiously among them) begrudging developing nations their new shares of the industrial and agricultural markets. The only way that the American economy can be sustained prosperously is by a wide-ranging scientific transformation of our national economy. In the sweep of history other people will perform the economic functions we performed for a century. We will perform new functions, some of which are as yet barely imaginable. But this will not come to us

CAUTION: MORE FINGER-POINTING AHEAD

Next week TNR will publish its Quadrennial Recriminations Issue. This special collector's issue, a NEW REPUBLIC tradition since 1980, will be devoted to an orgy of Democratic finger-pointing. It could get ugly; parental guidance suggested.

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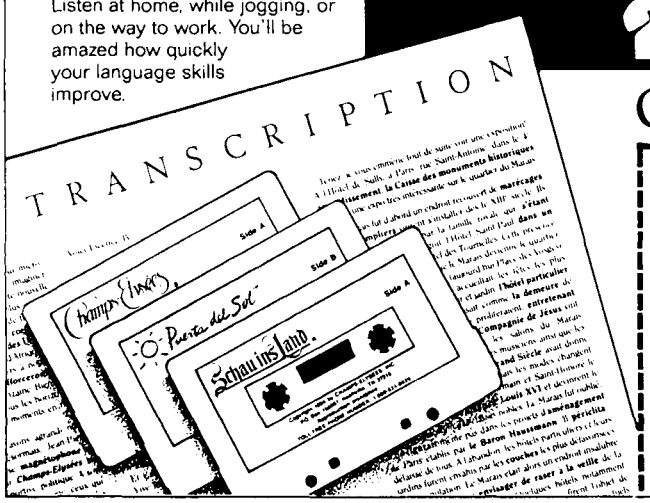

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easily or by natural right. We will have to compete hard with other advanced nations. All of this is just Turkish to Dukakis and, alas, to most of the other Democrats too. And it is provocative to some Democratic constituencies. But prosperity cannot survive our country becoming what Charles Murray calls a "custodial democracy," with ever more of our young and minority population altogether and permanently out of the work force.

This is the great taboo subject of American liberalism. But it is on everyone's mind. The Republicans are prepared to leave the unproductive and, to be truthful, the parasitic sectors mired in their misery. The Democrats are not: Dukakis promised everything to everyone—good jobs at good wages, superior education, adequate health care, everything this side of happiness, and some of that as well. But these promises are lies without a mobilization of the population for the old-fashioned middle-class self-discipline of schooling and work, of obligation for self and to others. But here the doctrine of rights again intrudes. Who among the liberals is prepared to say that mothers who cannot care for their children are not entitled to bring them into the world as burdens on society as a whole? Who among the liberals even will be willing to say that school districts may insist that their students wear white blouses or shirts as a modest way of bringing some visual order and esprit de corps to the chaos of urban education? Am I wrong in thinking that the American Civil Liberties Union would be in court on the morning any school superintendent so dared?

THE LIBERAL media commentators derided much of the talk about values during the campaign. We need not here belabor the callousness that goes with the GOP notion of community . . . and perhaps even the hypocrisy that goes with their sense of family. We have no illusions about and few expectations from the Republicans. But they talk about these matters fluidly. In contrast, most of the official national Democrats don't like talking about values, much as they don't like talking about national defense or resolute patriotism. When they get backed into making these buzzwords themes of a campaign it almost always sounds forced and stilted. This is for good reason. Democrats, and liberal Democrats in particular, were the attack force on some of those values people most cherish. The society almost all of us now bemoan in one way or another is a society made largely by liberals. Some honesty is demanded here. Some regret. And some redress. What the people want from their president is someone who can both articulate the values the nation needs to retrieve and embody those values in his own bearing and in his own life. Given what Michael Dukakis does stand for, what he truly cares about, there is no way he could have won the warrant to shape the public philosophy. That warrant is not now, however, in better hands.

P. S. I cannot resist reminding readers of our support for Senator Albert Gore Jr. On all of the issues on which Dukakis and the Democrats turned out to be so fatally vulnerable Gore would have been untouchable. This is not because he is wanting in the progressive impulse or a progressive record. But he knows that proper democratic politics is both substance and symbol, rights and duties, past and future. It's my view that he would have beaten the lazy mind of George Bush in every debate, and that he would have won the final contest that is the warrant to lead.

MARTIN PERETZ

Our powerless presidential monarchy.

KING GEORGE I

A MAJOR REASON why Lloyd Bentsen's debate performance stood out so sharply from that of the other three contestants on the campaign trail was that he seemed not only to know the issues, but actually to be doing something about them. On item after item, the message was the same: Bentsen had "passed" a historic international trade bill and the most important welfare reform "in our history"; he had played a "major role" in important environmental legislation; he had directly pressured the prime minister of Japan to cut trade barriers and to shoulder a fair burden of the cost of defending the Far East.

Implicit in this message was a further point: not only is Lloyd Bentsen one of those who run Congress, but it is Congress—not the White House—that runs the government the way the people want it run.

And indeed, although Ronald Reagan is one of the most popular presidents in recent history, he will leave office as one of the least effective. Reagan remains king, but on issues such as international trade, environmental protection, education, health, ethics in government, even civil rights, the parliament has come to rule. And despite the fact that the Democrats in the 100th Congress lacked a single, charismatic leader to serve as a de facto prime minister, our de facto parliament was increasingly able to impose the kind of activist policies that the public seems once again to demand. Men—most of them relatively unknown to the public—such as Lloyd Bentsen, Dan Rostenkowski, Tom Downey, Henry Waxman, John Dingell, Bill Gray, and Barney Frank, as well as some Republicans, such as Bob Dole and Jack Danforth, have stepped into the void left by Reagan's passivity and his visceral but increasingly out-of-step conservatism.

With its last-minute surge of major legislation, the 100th Congress startled the national press. But in fact the achievements of October 1988 simply capped a long-running trend. Immediately after Reagan attained his initial, admittedly historic, success in changing federal priorities with bigger defense budgets, lower domestic expenditures, and lower taxes, he began to cede power to Congress. At the same time, he found himself recurrently obliged to accept agency heads and even White House

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senior officials who were not really his people or in sympathy with his philosophical instincts.

Reagan's power began to deteriorate in March 1983, when William Ruckelshaus replaced Anne Gorsuch Burford as head of EPA. Burford was in effect sacrificed for doing precisely what the president had sent her to EPA to do—initiate a radically new regime in which environmental protection was left largely to private market forces and voluntarism. Once alerted, the public responded with a rare "firestorm" of disapproval. The firestorm could be quelled only by the selection of a Ruckelshaus, known not only as a strict environmental enforcer but as the man who had refused a decade earlier to knuckle under to Richard Nixon over Watergate. Ruckelshaus turned EPA back toward the center and named his own successor, Lee Thomas, a career civil servant responsible for Superfund enforcement, and the agency stayed essentially out of Reagan's control for the duration of his administration. Between 1981 and 1983, funding for the agency's core programs had dropped between 20 and 45 percent; after that, funding held steady. In 1986, after large congressional majorities voted a fivefold increase in Superfund resources and strengthened enforcement powers, Reagan backed away from a veto threat under the urging of EPA Administrator Thomas.

At the time, the Burford affair had seemed like an isolated setback. In retrospect it was a harbinger of defeats to come.

REPEATEDLY, an outgunned President Reagan has had to decide whether to fight over particular controversies and face certain defeat, retire to the sidelines, or claim victory when in fact his own preferences were being overridden. An early example of the last scenario was the Tax Equity and Fiscal Reform Act of 1982. Bob Dole, then chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, pushed through a raft of Democrat-originated loophole-closers to cut the deficit by $50 billion at the expense of the wealthy, and left the president little choice but to embrace the tax reform bill as his own. Dole succeeded with a similar maneuver the same year when he forced the White House to accept an extension of the 1965 Voting Rights Act without any of the weakening amendments championed by William Bradford Reynolds's rightist intelligentsia in the Justice Department.

Indeed, it was during this early period, when Reagan still retained his overall dominance, that he began to display his talent for what is known in Washington as eating dirt and calling it ice cream—one of the skills that has enabled him to play so well the role of ceremonial monarch. Some would consider a more dramatic example his signing of an arms control treaty opposed by his erstwhile conservative allies, and his subsequent rush to proclaim an era of unprecedented U.S.-Soviet comity.

On many of the major economic policy decisions made during the Reagan reign, especially in its second term, the White House has not even been a major player. The trade bill was forced on the administration by the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means committees. The catastrophic health bill was produced by the Health and Human Services Department and sympathetic congressional Democrats with little substantive White House input. The AT&T divestiture, clearly one of the most consequential actions under this administration, happened with no White House participation. The multibillion dollar omnibus drug and AIDS bills passed during the last week of this session were pure congressional artifacts. Even tax reform, the principal domestic triumph of the second term, owes more to Bill Bradley and the permanent bureaucracies on the Treasury and congressional tax committee staffs than to Ronald Reagan, who was startled to learn (after it had reached his desk) that it would raise taxes paid by many large corporations.

Under other recent administrations, such initiatives could not have prevailed without significant involvement by White House domestic policy experts—under a Ted Sorensen, a Joseph Califano, a John Ehrlichman, a James Cannon, or a Stuart Eizenstat. The analogous Reagan staff (called the Office of Policy Development) is all but invisible outside its quarters in the Old Executive Office Building—a fact that is both a symptom and a cause of the policy irrelevance of the Reagan White House.

THE SAME PATTERN has been evident in noneconomic fields: Reagan challenged the constitutionality of the independent counsel law and complained about the damage it did to the careers of his close advisers, but he impotently signed the bill reauthorizing it rather than face a certain veto override. And then, of course, when he did choose to "be Reagan" and recommend Robert Bork for the Supreme Court (against the advice of Howard Baker, the moderate he had been obliged to accept as chief of staff), Reagan suffered the most humiliating judicial nomination defeat in history.

But despite the Bork defeat, Iran-*contra*, and other lesser setbacks, Reagan's magic "Teflon" has stayed unscratched; repudiation of the president's policies has not led to rejection of the man as president.

And that, of course, could well have been the nub of Michael Dukakis's problem. The public may have grown too comfortable with having a graceful and likable monarch who has little to do with the real business of government, while an activist Congress keeps the ship of state in the mainstream and meets our national needs. That may help explain why, for all the support his domestic policy views seemed to enjoy, Dukakis failed to persuade a majority that a Democratic hands-on CEO was needed in the White House to make those views prevail.

Perhaps, in short, Lloyd Bentsen's Congress has done its work too well.

SIMON LAZARUS

Simon Lazarus was a member of President Carter's White House Domestic Policy Staff and currently practices law in Washington.

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"My job is to design a wing to lift 200 tons."

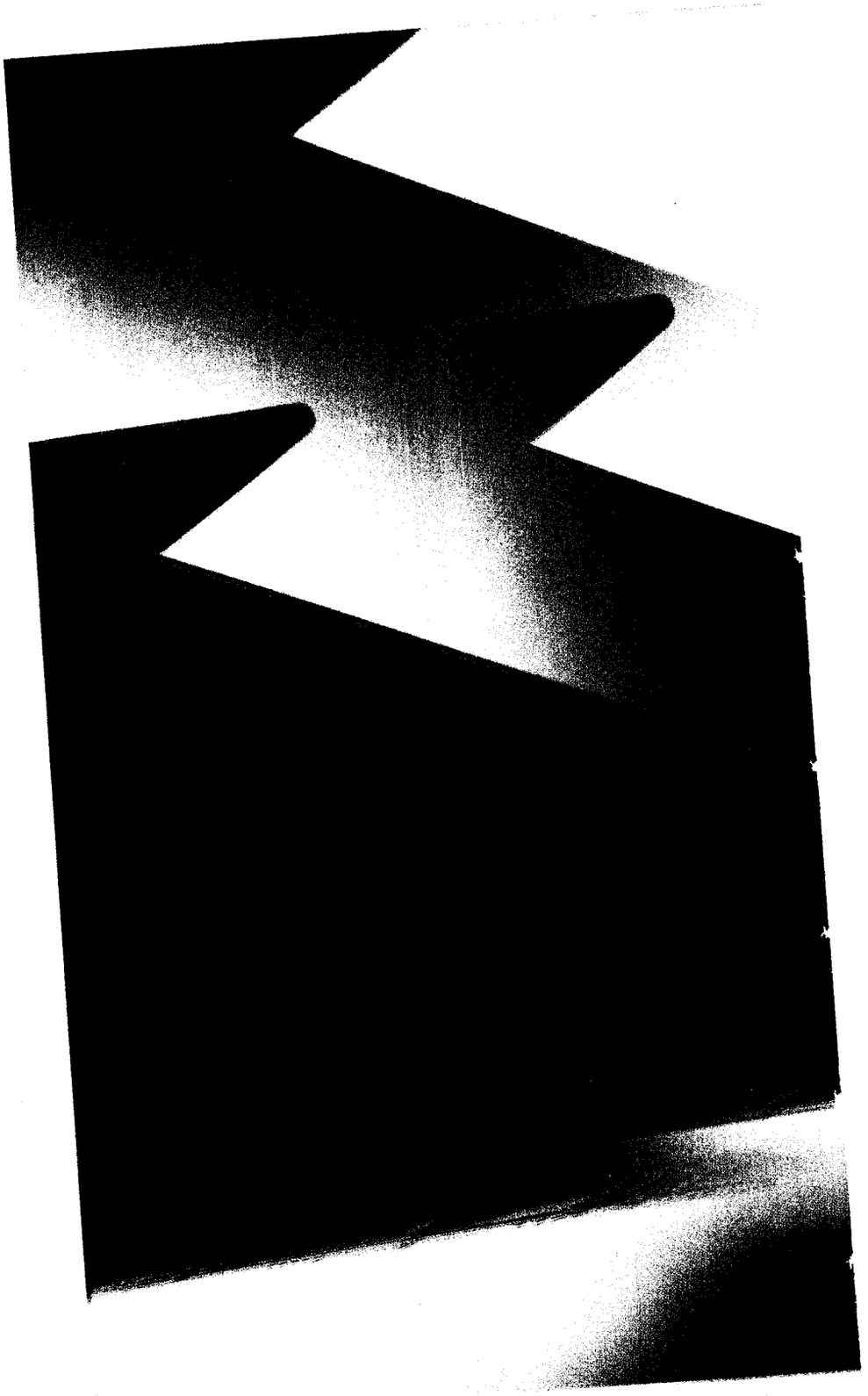

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Photo by Ken Kennedy

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

The Good Shepard

One advantage in being Sam Shepard, besides his talents, is in having enough clout to make a film that's all his own. No other author or director or packager could have raised money for *Far North*. But then no one else would have had the particular vision to conceive it.

This is Shepard's first piece of film directing. He has directed in the theater with much of the strophic energy he shows here: a passage of the ballad rounded off with a flourish, then on to another passage. He has written for the screen several times and has adapted one of his plays (*Fool for Love*). He has played film roles (*Fool for Love* was the last major one). He doesn't appear in *Far North*; there's no role for him, nor for any man his age, in the theme of the script. Otherwise, this is all Shepard's work, wild, funny, lyric and loose. What holds the film together is his passion for the unseen America, past and present, that creates the America we see.

Far North
(Alive Films)

This time he leaves his usual Western haunts—and haunted they are for him—to burrow into the home country of his companion, Jessica Lange, who plays a leading role. It's northern Minnesota, not a great way from Duluth and Lake Superior. In this landscape, which feels a bit raw even on sunny days, Shepard fixes his subjects: the persistence of country life in a nation tugged everywhere by urban standards; the disappearance of young men from this countryside; the ancient and now-humorous contest between man and animal—in this case a stubborn horse; the struggle to keep a large scale in a small-scale existence (in this case an ex-railroad man who does unlikely things); the explosions of sex. Shepard connects all these subjects—to some degree, anyway—with interwoven stories about the members of a stubborn family. Stubbornness is their chief common trait.

At the start, the screen is black. No sound. Then bird song, the cawing of crows, an owl hoot. Then some of the credits. Then a swift sliver of landscape rushing by. More credits, then a slightly longer sliver; more credits and an even longer sliver. Then after the last credits, a good long look at the landscape rushing by, and a cut to a fat old man, Charles Durning, on the seat of a buckboard, trying to rein in a runaway black horse whom he calls both "Mel" and "you bastard."

This opening certifies that imagination is roaring forth to carry us off. The racing buckboard soon hits a rock and overturns. Durning is thrown out and knocked out. The horse, free of the shafts, stands looking at him. We even get a close-up of the horse's eye, confirming Durning's belief that the horse hates him. Who uses horses as characters anymore?

From Mel we cut to Jessica Lange, Durning's elder daughter, who has flown home from New York where she works, to see her battered father. He is in a hospital bed, black and blue. First, he senses (correctly) that Lange is pregnant, though unmarried. Second, he tells her what he wants her to do. He orders her to shoot the horse. There's no other man in the family to do it, and it has to be done soon, the father barks, so that Mel knows he's being shot for trying to kill him.

Sharply played by Durning and Lange, this funny scene takes us right out of its modern setting into an older kind of antagonism. We then go home and meet the rest of the family: Lange's sister, crisp Tess Harper, who too is an unwed mother; her teenage daughter, Patricia Arquette, rapidly en route to becoming an unwed mother herself; the sisters' mother, played dizzily by Ann Wedgeworth; and *her* mother, Nina Draxten, an old crab soon to be 100. Lange's attempts to shoot Mel, whom she sometimes imagines with a white X on his forehead to mark the target; Harper's attempts to prevent her from killing the horse Harper loves; everyone's attempts to control the overheated Arquette; Durning's boozing in the hospital with an old alcoholic cousin and their drunken escape from the hospital—these are the main materials of this country-music film. Not for nothing are the Red Clay Ramblers on the sound track: we can almost hear fiddle interludes between stanzas.

Connections are not tight. Credibility is lean. (Durning and the other old man, Donald Moffat, fresh out of hospital beds, trudge miles through the night toward their home.) A few touches are egregiously stock. (The daffiness of Wedgeworth; the shot from an "unloaded" rifle.) But it all has the texture of an American tall tale, rambling yet robust. The family quarrels—as in *Curse of the Starving Class*—have the Shepard mixture of skin-ripping anger and self-parody. And the sequences involving Mel really tickle.

Shepard fine-tunes it all for the ear and the eye. Aided by a good editor, Bill Yarhaus, he keeps intercutting slashes of contrapuntal materials: the countryside

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Hotel Terminus. Marcel Ophuls's new work lacks focus—it dwells too long on secondary South American episodes—but this documentary about Klaus Barbie is not to be missed. (Reviewed 10/24/88)

The Last Temptation of Christ. Martin Scorsese's first temptation was a bogus novel, of which he made an utterly serious, occasionally moving film. Superlative costumes and photography. (9/12&19/88)

Salaam Bombay! Something more than a look at the street children of Bombay. Though a bit clumsy and distended, the concern of the director, Mira Nair, and the quality of the ten-year-old leading "man" often make it strike home. (11/14/88)

Without a Clue. Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson at a new angle. That angle is promising, but the plodding script doesn't live up to it. Still, Michael Caine and Ben Kingsley, sparkling both, almost compensate. (11/14/88)

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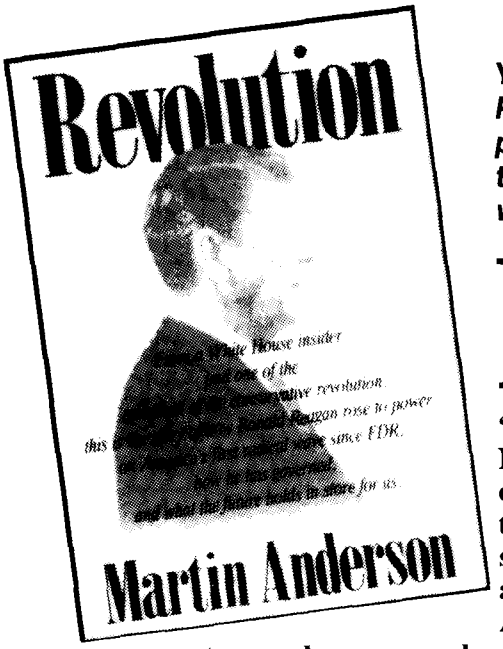

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from which these people take their being or a crowded city street that is the opposite pole or a reified moment of fantasy (Wedgeworth suddenly appearing in a dress she wore in a long-ago photograph). Shepard wants to include all of family-time, then and now, in every scene and wants their homeland to play its part.

With his actors, the director who is himself a good actor never misses. Durning growls along amusingly. Lange and Harper are completely taking. Arquette is so lubricious and at the same time so childish that we keep nodding in wry recognition. Shepard sums up much of what his actors have been trying to do in one particularly striking shot. Lange and Harper and Arquette, after frantic chases in the woods looking for Mel, finally find him, and all three ride home slowly on his back under a very full moon. Patently arranged though it is, the shot gives us family unity and the country night in essence.

Evidently the family is of Norwegian origin: at grandma's 100th birthday party they all sing a Norwegian song. (Origins are another Shepard concern.) They give grandma a photograph of Wedgeworth with her two daughters when they were small, and the old woman crabs: "Where are the men?" True, we realize. No husbands are present, no young men. There's a temporary lapse in continuity here. Small boys are going to have to grow up, baby boys need to be born. The family is apparently ready for a leap forward.

Mel seems to have won out at the end in the struggle with Durning, but the very last shot, even though it's fantasy, shows tough persistence on Durning's part.

Disrupted and disruptive, as ornery and independent as Mel, *Far North* breaks away from order to move through disorder to older, deeper orders. In this quest for basic myth, it resembles Bill Forsyth's lovely *Housekeeping*. But *Far North* is itself because Shepard is himself—a poet of America's history, visible and invisible. We're lucky to have him.

The philosophers' war on the L-word.

THE COMMUNITY TRAP

BY STEPHEN HOLMES

THE DISPARAGEMENT of "liberalism" is not a passing fashion of the late 1980s. It is a recurring feature of Western political culture at least since the French Revolution. Nineteenth-century enemies of the Enlightenment, from de Maistre to Nietzsche, poured scorn on liberal ideas and aspirations. In Europe, during the 1920s and '30s, hostility toward liberalism was the one attitude on which extreme rightists and extreme leftists could agree. And in American universities, amazingly enough, this venerable tradition continues to flourish. In the century of Hitler and Stalin, wise professors are still branding liberalism as the Great Enemy.

Why would some of America's leading intellects revile a tradition devoted, among other things, to freedom of thought? A generation ago, Martin Heidegger's subterranean but hypnotic influence prepared the way for this odd development. His harsh indictment of "modernity" was adapted to the mental horizon of their new American audience by Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss. Having been welcomed as immigrants to this country, they did not insist that the "decline" of modern times was caused by a "forgetfulness of Being," in Heidegger's phrase; that would have been wholly unintelligible to their culturally backward readers. Decadent modernity, they deftly explained, was due rather to the forgetfulness of the Greek polis (Arendt) or of classical natural law (Strauss). Meanwhile Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, and other members of the Frankfurt school helped popularize Heidegger's suggestion that "modern man" has lost his primeval reverence for nature and adopted instead a basically instrumental attitude toward the world. A penchant for instrumental thinking, they argued, is the principal sign of our fallen condition; habituated to thinking instrumentally about nature, we tend to think instrumentally about each other as well.

Heideggerian ideas of this sort, desacralized and domesticated in various ways, spread through American universities in the '50s and '60s. In the '70s and '80s, the scene looked different. Attacks on "modernity" were largely replaced by attacks on "liberalism." But the underlying pattern of hostility, belittlement, and rebuke is the same. Take Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, Roberto Unger's *Knowledge and Politics*, Michael Sandel's *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*. It's nearly impossible to locate these influential works (their notions have found their way to the op-ed pages) on a spectrum from left to right, but they all express distaste or disgust for liberal politics and ideals. MacIntyre is by far the most candid of the three about the religious sources of his antiliberalism; he openly derides "secular reason," and writes admiringly of "authority" and dismissively of the "democratic self." Unger has recently converted from a traditional Catholic form of antiliberalism to a radical Nietzschean one. Sandel lyrically celebrates "loyalty" and "allegiance" to "this family or community or nation or people," and chastises liberalism for loosening ethnic, religious, and social "bonds."

The historical pedigree of antiliberalism deserves stressing because contemporary antiliberals frequently neglect it. They typically furnish a stylized, even sanitized, genealogy for their central ideas. MacIntyre gladly invokes Aristotle, but omits the bitter attacks on liberal theory and institutions that have loomed so large in 19th- and 20th-century political thought. This omission is not accidental.

Brilliant but discredited theorists among European fascists, such as Giovanni Gentile and Carl Schmitt, violently assailed the liberal tradition. They excoriated liberalism for its atomistic individualism, its myth of the pre-social individual, its scanting of the organic, its indifference to community, its denial that man belongs to a larger whole, its belief in the primacy of rights, its flight from "the political," its uncritical embrace of economic categories, its moral skepticism (or even nihilism), its decision to give abstract procedures and rules priority over substantive values and commitments, and its hypocritical

Stephen Holmes teaches political philosophy at the University of Chicago and is the author of *Benjamin Constant and the Making of Modern Liberalism* (Yale University Press).

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reliance on the sham of judicial neutrality. Sound familiar?

I do not mean, of course, to convict today's antiliberals of dangerous thoughts. (They benefit from historical circumstances that make them politically harmless.) I want to draw attention, instead, to the fundamentally ahistorical character of their thinking. Antiliberals talk endlessly about rootedness and tradition, but they nonchalantly disregard their own intellectual descent. They could easily distinguish themselves from their most unsavory precursors, I suppose. But they make no effort to do so, leaving readers perplexed. They blithely deplore what they consider the liberal individual's lack of "constitutive attachments," for example, but they never mention that this complaint was long the centerpiece of anti-Semitic propaganda, of political attacks on "uprooted" and cosmopolitan Jews.

No single theorist, of course, is a perfect antiliberal. Liberalism's cleverest critics often qualify their attacks, and make important concessions. Many of them supplement their criticisms of liberal thinkers with criticisms of some antiliberal thinkers as well. Despite these complexities, however, antiliberalism retains the aspect of a coherent attitude, if not of a cogent doctrine. Above all, an identical set of mistakes and misdescriptions surfaces, with astonishing regularity, in almost all antiliberal works.

There are at least six fallacies, or intellectual failings, of contemporary antiliberalism.

The Phantom Community

No society, of course, fully realizes the principles and the aspirations of liberalism. Liberals criticize societies that, while professing liberal ideals, fail in practice to protect rights and satisfy basic needs. Antiliberals lodge a different complaint. They blame liberal society not for failing to achieve liberal goals, but for aiming so low. The "crisis" of our society is not that we have achieved justice only imperfectly, but that we have become fixated on such a colorless ideal. We cannot be satisfied, for example, with an expansion of welfare rights; something more should be achieved by the state. Politics must aim higher, at something more uplifting than justice—more inspiring, more comforting, more spiritual, more erotic.

That something is community. According to Unger (and this is a remark that can be fished from almost any antiliberal text), "the political doctrine of liberalism does not acknowledge communal values." MacIntyre agrees that the "notion of the political community as a common project is alien to the modern liberal individualist world." For Sandel, citizens of a liberal state are doomed to the miserable isolation of "strangers."

Liberalism is dissatisfying because it fails to provide what we yearn for most: fraternity, solidarity, harmony, and most magically, community. Antiliberals invest this word with redemptive significance. When we hear it, all our critical faculties are meant to fall asleep. In the vocabulary of antiliberals, "community" is used as an anesthetic, an amnesiac, an aphrodisiac. Unger actually calls it, apparently without irony, "the political equivalent of love."

But what is community? What does it look like? What are *its* problems?

Antiliberals are divided on these questions. Some locate community in the past, others espy it in the future. The former write *deprivation history*, wringing their hands about the world we have lost. (Their trademark is that melancholy cluster of words, "decay," "breakdown," "decline," "erosion," "impoverishment," "eclipse.") The latter compose *promissory history*, in which anticipation and hope provide consolation for the dreariness or the meaninglessness of the present. For all their differences, communitarians of the past and communitarians of the future share one thing: neither tells us anything specific about the community we lack. And this is not an incidental feature of antiliberalism; it is an essential one. Antiliberals rhapsodize about neighborhoods, churches, school boards, and so forth; but they never provide sufficient detail about the political institutions they favor to allow us to compare the advantages and disadvantages of illiberal community with the vices and virtues of the liberal societies we know.

All political arrangements involve the use of physical force. Thus, at a minimum, antiliberals should be specific about the conditions under which, in their ideal order, sanctions would be applied. Does moral revulsion at "radical separation" among citizens require making divorce and emigration illegal? What does a commitment to "solidarity" imply about the authority of majorities over dissident minorities? Should children of Jehovah's Witnesses be compelled to submit to the community-binding powers of the Pledge of Allegiance? Would present-day antiliberals advocate making *incivisme* into a punishable crime, as it was in France during the Terror? Presumably they would not. But they are reluctant to say so openly, perhaps to avoid being observed defending civil liberties and individual rights.

The Myth Of "The Social"

On the face of it, the category "social" should refer to the entire gamut of human motives, actions, and institutions. "Social" is (or should be) a descriptive term. To say that an action or motive is "social" is not to imply that it is necessarily good. While some "social purposes" are morally praiseworthy, others (such as racial purity) are morally repugnant.

That an aspiration is "shared" does not mean that it is intrinsically admirable. Conversely, immoral behavior is not defined by any lack of a social dimension. No asocial atom would strive to

Come Back

Come back, you were my first blue radio, Connecticut
Snows. You were the Cape Cod sunrise on the dunes,
First lovemaking in a bag.
You never understand my speech nor I yours, but
I admired you anyway as a Jew's
Harp, a thing of the past, a paper bag, a drug
Store saleslady in white giving out free
Cherry Cokes, Hot Rod magazines, freedom
From heritage, a way across the country
In a used red bus which went dead, went crazy:
Come back, you were my first ticket to pain.

Rob Wilson

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humiliate others publicly or consume the envy of inferiors. The blood feud is not an absence of sociality, but a form of sociality. The relation between master and slave is no less "social" (though it is less desirable) than the relation between intimate friends.

Antiliberals, however, transcend such common sense. They surreptitiously smuggle moral approval into ostensibly descriptive categories such as "group loyalty," "collective aims," "constitutive attachments," and "social bonds." Sheldon Wolin, in the same spirit, seems to apply the label "the political" solely to political activity that he admires. It is as if "the dental" referred exclusively to healthy teeth. Unfortunately, as history reveals, collective action can be monstrous and "group aims" may include genocide. And the personal identity of a racist or religious bigot may be (indeed, is) "socially constituted" without being morally laudable.

In plain words, "the social nature of man" is too trite to count as an insight. The social constitution of the individual is worthless as an argument either for or against existing institutional arrangements. If all individuals are socially constituted, then the social self cannot serve as a critical standard to praise some societies and revile others. From the uncontroversial premise that "man is a social animal" antiliberals draw the highly controversial conclusion that a warm and solidaristic social order is morally obligatory. But the inference is bogus. They deduce a "value" from a "fact," only by a conceptual sleight of hand.

The 17th-century founders of liberalism, we are told, foolishly believed that "men are self-sufficient outside society." Because "man is a social animal," liberalism is theoretically false and politically bankrupt. Man alone is naturally endowed with capacities that can be exercised only in society. Therefore man is "obliged to belong" to society. People are morally required to sustain the conditions without which they cannot realize their inborn potentials.

The weakness of this reasoning lies in the tacit assumption that the characteristically human capacities that cannot be exercised except in society are necessarily praiseworthy. What the communitarian antiliberals consistently forget is that society is a dangerous place in which to grow up. It is only through intense social interaction that human beings acquire their worst follies and fanaticisms: the capacity for intolerance or racism would never flourish in pre-social isolation.

Either/Or

Another infirmity of antiliberal thought is an addiction to crude dichotomies, notably to the contrasts private interest/public virtue and base individualism/noble community. These alternatives are unsatisfactory, first of all, because they obscure the possibility of private virtue. They also suggest that individualism is necessarily anti-social. This fails to account for the fact that individualism can involve a heightened concern *for others* as individuals, rather than as members of ascriptive groups. The greatest threat to social cohesion, moreover, arises not from individualism but from collective passions, ideological conflict, and inherited rivalries between hostile factions. In factional settings, solidarity is a problem, not a solution.

Antiliberals invariably suggest that when people overcome their self-interest, they are necessarily acting in an admirable and public-spirited way. They assume, in other words, that selfless/selfish segues smoothly into good/bad. But this leaves out of the account the prominent place of selfless cruelty in human affairs. It is much easier to be

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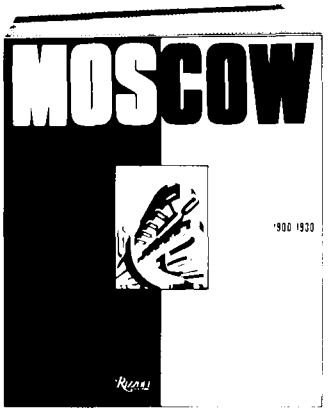

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cruel if you act for the sake of others, or for the sake of a "cause," than if you act for your own sake. Those who have homosexuals shot in the name of Islamic revolution are morally abhorrent, but they cannot be accused of anti-social individualism or base self-interest. And there would be no terrorism or ethnic warfare without selfless devotion to social groupings. In other words, the bloody events we read about every day contain a pertinent refutation of one of the crucial premises of antiliberalism. Those who overcome self-interest are not automatically benevolent or humane.

To And Fro

While trumpeting their own audacity, antiliberals are not quite exempt from ordinary inhibitions. When striving to catch our attention, they routinely present their indescribable community as an *alternative* to liberal society. Once they succeed in attracting a sufficient number of critical onlookers, however, they tend to retreat to the more modest position that such community is merely a *supplement* to liberal society. The first claim is absurd and the second is trivial. The double strategy of thrust and parry, however, should not be underestimated.

It has rhetorical advantages. The built-in option between two claims—one newsworthy but implausible, the other convincing but bland—gives antiliberalism enormous resilience, and a capacity for survival. By artfully shifting weight from one foot to another, antiliberals can claim both originality and sobriety, taking maximum advantage of whatever audience is at hand. The naive are promised something extraordinary and the doubters are appeased.

But these gains are purchased by the sacrifice of stylistic unity. Antiliberal works are typically marred by a schizophrenic tone. A high-pitched jeremiad is often followed by a tiptoed retreat. After fiercely attacking liberalism, antiliberals inevitably flip-flop into last-minute concessions, erasing their initial protests, assuring us that they can continue to benefit, without hypocrisy, from the principles and the institutions that they otherwise heroically oppose.

The Shifting Target

Antiliberals tend to oscillate woozily between a criticism of liberal theory and a criticism of liberal society. Sometimes they say that liberalism is simply wrong: liberals are making a factual mistake when they suggest that individuals are pre-existent atomic units, and that all social relations are as instrumental as voluntary contracts struck in the market. These "typically liberal" claims are false, runs the argument, because individuals are socially constituted, because wholes are prior to parts, because what they like to call "constitutive" social relations exist. At other times, however, antiliberals advance a contrary line of argument. Liberalism, they mournfully confess, is descriptively correct: modern society has become atomized, social bonds have snapped, instrumental relations are universal, group membership has become optional, that is, derivative from individual wills and subservient to private interests. Mirroring that bleak truth, liberal theory is doomed to be a dismal but not inaccurate science.

This waffle is disorienting, but characteristic. (MacIntyre both denies that Aristotle's theory of the social self applies to "atomized" modern societies and insists that it does apply, although neo-Aristotelians alone have grasped the elusive fact. Sandel confusingly asserts that our lives are bad because they *enact* a theory that *fails to describe* our lives.) It is obviously contradictory to say that lib-

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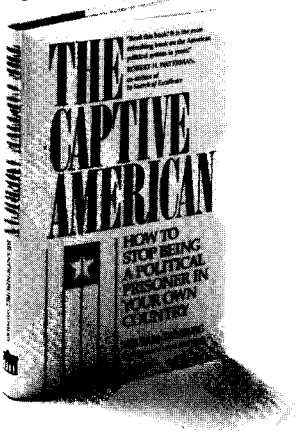

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eral individuals do not exist and that the ones who exist are excruciatingly unhappy. Yet this entertaining contradiction is something like the official handshake of the antiliberal movement. On the one hand, social bonds exist even though liberals do not see them. On the other hand, social bonds do not exist, while liberals who report their nonexistence must suffer the fate of all those who bring the bad news—that is, they must be condemned for failing to denounce what they have discovered.

You Have Nothing To Lose But Your Concepts

Not surprisingly, some antiliberals feel uneasy about zigzagging between such patently incompatible claims. To reconcile the existence of liberal individuals with their nonexistence, they note that a person's self-understanding will decisively affect his behavior. If a person thinks he is a croque-monsieur, this will not make him into a croque-monsieur, but it will cause him to act in unusual ways. Analogously, if he thinks he is an atomistic individual, this will not turn him into an atomistic individual, but it will lead him to behave oddly: as a liberal citizen, as an economic man. In other words: liberal ideology is true *and* false. Our theory guides and hides our practice. Our impoverished language of radical individualism both distorts our behavior and denies us "access" to our communal selves.

Antiliberals conceive of themselves, then, not only as diagnosticians, but also as midwives. Because liberals disparage "the social," we read over and over again, they not only misdescribe human action, they also allow the best part of life to wither on the vine. By redescribing human existence accurately, as thoroughly dependent on a nourishing social milieu, antiliberals can make it worthwhile once again, or perhaps for the first time. They promise to unearth the buried treasure, to make explicit the implicit, to release the warm human potential half-frozen beneath the ice of liberal ideology. Antiliberals, in other words, advocate a transformative politics that is reassuringly benign. Merely by correcting the delusions of liberal theory, the hermeneutical sage will accomplish the reform of liberal society. He will "improve" us against our will, but therapeutically, not coercively helping us become explicitly what we already are latently. He will articulate the shared understandings that the rest of us have half-forgotten, thereby abolishing loneliness and rendering our lives, at last, joyfully communal.

But intellectual criticism and social transformation cannot be so effortlessly combined. A theoretical cause in the past does not guarantee a theoretical cure in the present, because earlier ideas may have set irreversible social processes in motion. (Needless to say, antiliberals never provide a causal account of how this philosopher-instigated transfiguration of humanity and society might actually come about.) In any case, the belief that a criticism of theory, by itself, entails a remaking of society speaks volumes about the self-image of antiliberals. The professional myth-demolisher is not just another desk-bound professor. He is, at least potentially, the founder of a beautiful new (or old?) world of togetherness and belonging.

THESE FALLACIES are invariably accompanied by a series of historical distortions. Antiliberals claim that classical liberals affirmed the primacy of economic man, asserted that moral values are wholly subjective, had exorbitant confidence in the powers of Reason, and so forth. None of these charges is true. They are surely not true of Milton, Spinoza, Locke, Montesquieu, Hume, Voltaire, Smith, Kant, Madison, or Mill. Such misrepresentations gain plausibility only when liberal writings are wrested from the political and polemical contexts that gave them their original content and moral appeal.

I suspect, though, that these distortions are with us for good. No criticism or exposé seems to make them disappear. We may shame them into hiding temporarily, but they will soon resurface in an altered guise. The best we can aspire to produce is not a cure, but a fight. Perhaps some good will come from a list of symptoms, an identity kit, a Reader's Guide to Antiliberal Culture. Even those friendly to antiliberalism should welcome the attempt. At the very least, it will provide antiliberals with a checklist of the ways in which they can be misunderstood. Do they dislike the diagnosis? Then they can try to help us grasp what they "really" want to say.

THE ESSENTIAL POSTURE

The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics and Places by Nadine Gordimer edited with an introduction by Stephen Clingman

(Knopf, 384 pp., $19.95)

In a lecture at New York University on October 14, 1982, Nadine Gordimer said:

> I have to offer you myself as my most closely observed specimen from the interregnum; yet I remain a writer, not a public speaker: nothing I say here will be as true as my fiction.

The lecture is reprinted in *The Essential Gesture*, marking one of many such occasions in Gordimer's public life. There is nothing wrong with the quoted sentence, I suppose; and yet I find something not quite right with it either.

The Essential Gesture is a collection of Gordimer's essays, travel reports, and speeches. Their themes are the inescapable ones: apartheid, censorship, the government of South Africa and its appalling determination to keep the blacks suppressed. The travel reports deal with Egypt, the Congo River, Botswana, Madagascar, Ghana, and Transkei; these are invariably convincing, vivid, sharply detailed, like the tellingly observed moments in Gordimer's fiction. Most of the essays and speeches are testimonies. Gordimer writes as a white liberal of the left, trying to project herself far enough out of the privilege of being a white South African to imagine a transfigured society predicated (one thinks of the relation between Toby and Steven in *A World of Strangers*) on the brotherhood of man.

This project has always been difficult, even for a novelist with Gordimer's gifts. The most acute difficulty was the one she met in the early '70s, the years of Black Consciousness, when blacks in South Africa wanted nothing to do with whites, when they regarded the liberal gestures of white artists as merely prop-

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ping up a white-dominated society. Now that Black Consciousness has waned, Gordimer appears to have settled for what I shall call Tutuism, after Bishop Desmond Tutu's insistence that in "the struggle for the new South Africa," leadership "must be firmly in black hands." Since white South Africans have not been victims of oppression and exploitation, they must cede to blacks "a primacy in determining the course and goal of the struggle." In this spirit, Gordimer aspires to "the culture of a new kind of posited community, non-racial but conceived and led by blacks."

It is not clear to me how such a culture could be anything more or better than the present one turned upside down. It would involve a transfer of power, but not a disavowal of the relations of power that caused the present obscenity. *The Essential Gesture* shows the process by which Gordimer has arrived at Tutuism: it is interesting and moving so far as that goes, but it doesn't analyze with the necessary rigor the principles that Gordimer has come to adopt. It is odd that she contented herself with a position that so many characters in her novels have seen through. James Bray, in *A Guest of Honor*, would not be impressed by this talk of a posited non-racial community. Nor would Maureen and Bam Scales, in *July's People*, after the experience of being summoned to pay their respects to the local Chief.

Gordimer's reputation is based mainly upon her novels, and especially upon *July's People*, *Burger's Daughter*, *The Conservationist*, *The Lying Days*, *A World of Strangers*, *The Late Bourgeois World*, *A Guest of Honor*. It would be difficult to match this body of work, among contemporary novelists, for the enacted bearing of ideas and ideals upon the characters who hold them, and try—and sometimes fail—to live by them. Indeed, the truth of Gordimer's fiction is so impressive that I wonder why she continues to settle for the poor secondary truth of public speeches.

Her reputation has been extended by such occasions. Short of going to jail for her political convictions, she has borne witness to them, and has testified to the wretchedness of being a white liberal unable "to come to power and free blacks." But *The Essential Gesture* indicates that the conditions of public discourse are not those in which Gordimer's imagination is most scrupulously engaged. She has not been able to bend or to turn the occasions to the advantage of her rhetoric. In several essays and speeches she settles for a glowing sentiment, where nothing more than a sustained analysis of the facts is required:

> Whether a writer is black or white, in South Africa the essential gesture by which she enters the brotherhood of man—which is the only definition of society that has permanent validity—is a revolutionary gesture.

But the brotherhood of man is not a definition of society, nor is it even self-evident as a working notion. In the quoted sentence, as distinct from the context of *A World Of Strangers*, it is an empty phrase. If it were uttered by a politician on the right—and it might well be—its speaker would be mocked out of his rosy countenance. "A revolutionary gesture," perhaps; yes, if you like; but what precisely is the gesture? And does wishing it to be revolutionary make it a revolution?

Again, Gordimer speaks of loving truth enough to "pick up the blood-dirty shamed cause of the left, and attempt to re-create it in accordance with what it was meant to be, not what 65 years of human power-perversions have made of it." Fine; but then the right would ask for the same chance to call back many yesterdays and embody what its cause was meant to be. Gordimer rejects the request. Apparently capitalism was never any good, it didn't "offer any hope to fulfill the ultimate promise of equality, the human covenant man entered into with himself in the moment he did the impossible, stood up, a new self, on two feet instead of four." I suppose I should be stirred by that sentence, and by the idea of equality, however ill-defined, but it is suffused with the same easy glow as the brotherhood of man, and it has just about the same producible content.

"In the interregnum in which we co-exist," Gordimer urges, "the American left—disillusioned by the failure of communism—needs to muster with us of the Third World—living evidence of the failure of capitalism—the cosmic obstinacy to believe in and work towards the possibility of an alternative left, a democracy without economic or military terror." (Or, as Gandhi is said to have remarked on being asked what he thought of Western civilization: "It would be nice.") My own view is that there is far more urgent need for an uncosmic, modest obstinacy, to define the idea of the society one has in mind, and to suggest how it might be

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

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brought about. Piously waved sentiments are not enough. Nor is it good enough, even as uplifting rhetoric, to make dizzy allusions to Fanon, Lukacs, Barthes, Gramsci, and Brecht, as if those names, dropped with sufficient regularity, made definition and argument unnecessary.

Look again at the sentence that struck me as being not quite right:

> I have to offer you myself as my most closely observed specimen from the interregnum . . .

The interregnum, I take it, is the interval between white domination and black domination. The word turns up again in a quotation from Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, which Gordimer used as an epigraph for *July's People*: "The old is dying, and the new cannot be born: in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms." But *The Essential Gesture* offers little evidence that Gordimer has "closely observed" herself, as distinct from expressing a self that she takes in every respect for granted.

Indeed, the claims she makes for her sensibility are indelicately high. In the report on Nasser's Egypt, she says she proceeds "by sharpening my own eyes and ears and the shiver of receptivity on my skin." In a postscript to "Letter from Johannesburg, 1976," she writes:

> A Johannesburg newspaper asks if I will accept the nomination for the "Woman of the Year." I decline. Someone else will have that honor, perhaps even a woman from the small black professional elite. But this year the only candidates are surely Winnie Mandela, who came out of house arrest to stand between the police and the schoolchildren and be imprisoned, or any one of the black township women who have walked beside their marching children carrying water to wash the tear gas from their eyes.

There is a note in those sentences of something not entirely edifying, a touch of vanity in Gordimer's proclaimed self-abnegation. She is evidently willing to say things about herself that would be impressive if said about her by someone else:

> I have shunned the arrogance of interpreting my country through the private life that, as Theodor Adorno puts it, "drags on only as an appendage of the social process" in a time and place of which I am a part.

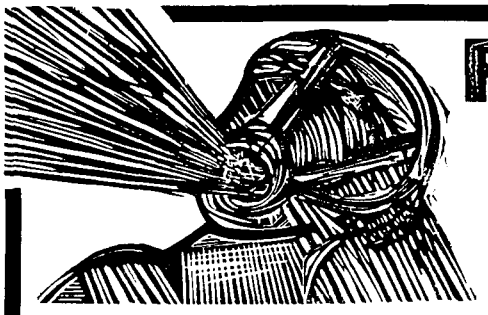
But she hasn't shunned the arrogance of telling us that she has shunned the arrogance. Gordimer has always, I am sure, done the right thing; but I'm perturbed to see her regularly pointing out how high-minded she has been in doing it.

SOMETIMES, Gordimer talks herself into unnecessarily awkward corners. She concedes that there is a black experience, which she, as a white writer, can't imagine. The concession is specious, a libel on the creative imagination, but let that pass. Gordimer scolds white readers for not appreciating that the work of black writers calls for a response to its quite distinctive terms:

> The difficulty, even boredom, many whites experience when reading stories or watching plays by blacks, in which, as they say, "nothing happens," is due to the fact that the experience conveyed is not "the development of actions" but "representation of conditions," a mode of artistic revelation and experience for those in whose life dramatic content is in its conditions.

A footnote directs the reader to two (white) writers, Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht, and to the Brechtian notion of "Epic Theater." But if a few performances of *Mother Courage* can put white South Africans into the proper state of receptivity to black plays, I can't see what the fuss is about.

In any case, when Gordimer herself



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reads black literature, she doesn't go Brechtian, or otherwise shed her white criteria:

> For me, the necessity for the black writer to find imaginative modes equal to his existential reality goes without question. But I cannot accept that he must deny, as proof of solidarity of his people's struggle, the torturous inner qualities of prescience and perception that will always differentiate him from others and that make of him a writer. I cannot accept, either, that he should have served on him, as the black writer now has, an orthodoxy—a kit of emotive phrases, an unwritten index of subjects, a typology.

There follows an attack on agitprop as "the first contemporary art form that many black South Africans feel they can call their own." But Gordimer can't, it seems to me, have the rhetoric both ways. If she accepts Bishop Tutu's plan for South Africa, then she has no business bringing demonstratively white criteria to bear upon the black literature it produces.

THE ESSENTIAL GESTURE would be a more attractive book if it didn't claim that the essential gesture is what Gordimer has always made. The book is revealing, especially when it shows political convictions floating freely beyond the conditions, real or imagined, in which they might be tested. And even in her novels, unfortunately, Gordimer is more and more inclined to displace observation by an appeal to theories and ideas. One is confronted by the asserted significance of characters, their roles prescribed lest any doubt should intervene, even before one is persuaded that these characters exist. She practices an art of allegory to begin with—even in her best novels, *Burger's Daughter* and *July's People*—and only gradually releases her characters to live their lives. It comes out convincingly; in the end, as with Lionel in *Burger's Daughter*, the figures are seen to be alive. But there is a risk, a temptation. Who was it who said that ideas are substitutes for passions? In *The Essential Gesture* the political ideas, many of them familiar from the novels, are protected against the intrusion of doubt or misgiving. They are so self-assured. I find it hard to care for their plumage.

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thirtiessomething

The First Salute: A View of the American Revolution by Barbara Tuchman

(Knopf, 347 pp., $22.95)

Barbara Tuchman may well be the most widely admired historian in America. An immense readership (including, we now know, Lloyd Bentsen) regards *The Guns of August*, which appeared in 1962, as the great history book of our time, a parable of the terrifying fragility of modern diplomacy and of humanity's infinite capacity for blunder. (John F. Kennedy helped seal the book's reputation when he remarked, smack in the middle of the Cuban missile crisis, that he wanted no future generation to read a book called *The Missiles of October*.) Since then, Tuchman has enjoyed a string of huge successes, on such commercially risky subjects as Europe in the 14th century and Joseph Stilwell in China. That she has done so without any formal academic connection or accreditation is a constant source of confusion and envy in faculty lounges across the land. That she has done so as a woman of a generation in which virtually all the best-known historians are men—and writing on such "unwomanly" subjects as war and diplomacy—provokes something closer to amazement and respect (though Tuchman, no latter-day feminist, would probably bridle at the thought).

The sources of Tuchman's achievement, however, are too little understood. It is said, for example, that the pessimistic cast of her books—their focus on historical calamities, and on the basic immutability of human nature—hits a responsive chord of dread in the nuclear age. More commonly, critics cite Tuchman's literary skills, especially in relating symbolic events and epic narrative: the old-fashioned virtues of a historian who composes in the grand writerly manner, not like some flat-footed sociologist. At a time when academic history looks more and more like a bastardized collection of charts and passive verbs, Tuchman is supposedly our last great historical storyteller and moralist.

Some of which may be true, but only superficially. The pessimism in Tuchman's books is hardly unrelieved; nor is it a product of the generic angst of modern times. And though Tuchman owes a great deal to the canonical narrative historians, her writings are not simply extensions of older conventions. To locate the origins of Tuchman's craft and sensibility, we need to look in part outside of history-writing altogether, to a particular time and a particular place: to the world of left-wing journalism in the late 1930s, and to Tuchman's coming-of-age as an idealistic liberal in the era of the Popular Front.

Barbara Wertheim was a privileged and talented young woman. The daughter of a prominent New York investment banker, her family was very much a part of "our crowd" of accomplished, liberal, assimilated German Jews. (Henry Morgenthau Sr. was her grandfather.) After graduating from Radcliffe College in 1933 in history and lit (and completing a so-so thesis on British imperialism), she took a volunteer job at the liberal-minded, impeccably establishment Institute of Pacific Relations, a group that would come in for some blistering red-baiting in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In October 1934 her work took her for a year's stay in Tokyo, as an assistant to the IPR's international secretary, William Lancelot Holland. Wertheim's time in Japan during fascism's consolidation of power deepened what would become an enduring interest in East Asian history and political affairs. It also provided her with a literary apprenticeship, as a contributor to various IPR publications. Upon her return to America she managed to place her first substantial piece of writing, reflections on Japanese diplomacy, in *Foreign Affairs*, which is what is known as starting at the top. But her real immersion in journalism came a bit later, when she was a staff writer at the *Nation*.

Maurice Wertheim, Barbara's father, was a man of what were once called "advanced" views—advanced, at any rate, for a New York investment banker. Best remembered today as a collector of French art, he was also one of the *Nation*'s biggest backers in the early 1930s; he counted among his good friends Oswald Garrison Villard, and Villard's successor as editor, Freda Kirchwey. In 1935 Villard sold the magazine to Wertheim to save it from bankruptcy. Shortly thereafter, Barbara Wertheim landed the lowly job of attending to the *Nation*'s clippings file. Gradually, she assumed more demanding responsibilities as an editorial writer, dashing off some of the squibs on current events that (then as now) appeared in the magazine's opening pages.

Things were tense but exhilarating at the *Nation*'s battered old offices on Vesey Street. The world was sliding into war, the New Deal was beginning the shift into its "second" phase—all of which kept young Wertheim on her toes. Apart from writing a piece or two of her own, she found herself condensing a multitude of subjects, from the woes of migrant labor to the proceedings of a Nazi Party Congress, into 200-word paragraphs incorporating the *Nation*'s viewpoint. Behind the scenes, meanwhile, bitter debates pitted staff liberals against staff leftists, and Stalinists against Trotskyists, with all the attendant name-calling and after-hours plotting. One of the nastier controversies, over FDR's court-packing scheme, prompted Maurice Wertheim, already disturbed by the *Nation*'s radical drift, to sell the magazine to Kirchwey in 1937.

What effect all this backbiting and polemicizing had on Barbara Wertheim is unclear. To judge from her writing that saw print, she would seem to have been more her father's daughter than not: a passionate liberal, opposed to the kind of non-interventionism that would have us turn away from the fascist threat, pro-New Deal, anti-Republican, no Marxist. Her Jewishness, though muted by her family's assimilationism and her grandfather's anti-Zionism, may have had as much to do with her anti-fascism as anything else. In any case, in 1937, armed with staff credentials from the *Nation*, she packed off from Vesey Street to witness the Spanish Civil War.

The cause of the Spanish Loyalists became the great commitment of Wertheim's youth. Her weeks in Madrid and Valencia produced only a little published work (although it included a fine bit of commentary, "What Madrid Reads," which revealed something of an eye for detail and a sensitivity to the continuities of everyday life amid horrifying bloodshed). Staying on in Britain and Europe, however, she threw herself into various activities against non-intervention and appeasement—"what was called by the other side 'premature anti-fascism,'" she remarked many years later. In London

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she wrote for a weekly bulletin, *War in Spain*, subsidized by the Spanish government. She also assembled, for a small pro-Loyalist publisher, her first book, *The Lost British Policy*, which argued for a British role in keeping Hitler out of Spain. ("Propaganda," sneered the reviewer for the *Times Literary Supplement*.) After returning to America in 1938, she collaborated with Jay Allen, the *Chicago Tribune*'s expert Spanish correspondent, in compiling a chronological record of the war's origins, a work apparently left unfinished.

FRANCO'S triumph broke Wertheim's heart. No longer, she reflected later, could she expect "that the right and the rational would win in the end." The Republic's fall "replaced my illusions with recognition of realpolitik; it was the beginning of adulthood." She marked that rite of passage in 1939 in THE NEW REPUBLIC with an angry denunciation of the Western democracies—and of the American Catholic Church, the State Department, Joseph P. Kennedy, the Hearst press, certain American businesses, the American Union for Nationalist Spain, and Father Coughlin—for their part in murdering the Loyalist government: "So let all those cheery citizens who are waving the democratic flag these days and tumbling over each other into print with books and plays on how wonderful democracy is and how wonderful America is and how wonderful we all are because we are Americans and democrats take time off and stop and look us over. Personally, I don't think we are so hot." Wertheim's title, "We Saw Democracy Fail," carried a double meaning. Democracy had failed, not only in Spain, but in the United States as well, where a handful of fat cats, hatemongers, and pious reactionaries had thwarted the majority's anti-fascist, pro-Loyalist sympathies.

Decades later, when she collected her essays, she excluded "We Saw Democracy Fail," saying that it embarrassed her. It's understandable: *Homage to Catalonia*, published several months before Wertheim's essay, made many of the "premature anti-fascist" writings about Spain sound simplified. Still, the piece is filled with splendid outrage at acts and inactions that can only be called outrageous. And, quite apart from the crucial lessons Wertheim began to learn about realpolitik, the piece sheds light on an emerging historical sensibility. Not just Franco, but America, too, had broken Wert-

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Mordecai Rosenfeld

***From* The Lament of the Single Practitioner:**
Although Roe v. Wade *became history, it became history somewhat the way the World Champion Dodgers of 1955 became history; both are there in the record books, but it is not clear if either affects play now, this year.*

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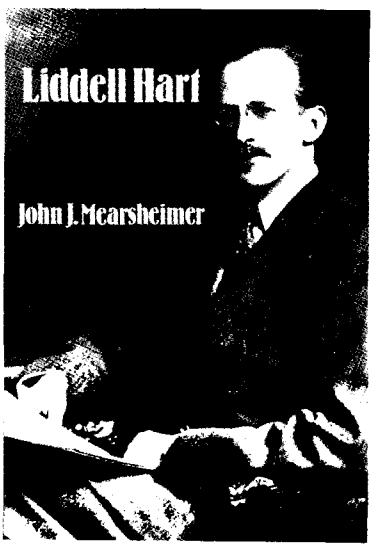
Liddell Hart
and the Weight of History



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heim's heart, compromising its highest ideals in what looked like complicity with Spanish fascism. Never again would the disillusioned liberal lose her skepticism about man's fate—or about the fate of humanity's noblest political principles. It would take a long time, nearly 50 years, before she could complete an entire book about the United States.

ALTHOUGH she continued to contribute to the *Nation* after her father sold it, Wertheim gradually drifted away from the cut-and-thrust of New York political journalism. In 1940 she married Lester Tuchman, a New York physician. During the war, with her husband overseas in the Medical Corps, she worked at the Far East desk at the Office of War Information in New York. Out of that experience would come some of the raw material for what later turned into her book on Joseph Stilwell—and along with that, a recognition that her love for extended historical inquiry (occasionally called upon, in doses, for her OWI work) ill-suited her temperamentally for meeting quick deadlines on a daily or weekly basis. After the war, she began research on a full-scale piece of history. That book, a study of relations between Britain and Palestine through 1918, grew in part out of family interests: at the outbreak of World War I, Henry Morgenthau, then the American ambassador to Turkey (and no Zionist), saved the Jewish colony of Palestine from starvation by arranging for a timely infusion of funds from the American Jewish Committee; and Maurice Wertheim personally delivered the money in a suitcase to Jerusalem. Delayed by domestic life, *Bible and Sword* did not appear until 1956. Thereafter, in rapid succession, came *The Zimmermann Telegram*, *The Guns of August*, *The Proud Tower*, and international acclaim.

From the outside it looked like a charmed life: marriage, children, wealth, society, plus the energy and the discipline for a stunning literary career. Freda Kirchwey, whose life was anything but charmed, could only admire how, in the early 1960s, her friend and one-time editorial charge managed to combine the "immense job" of writing and research "with the complications of children and social life and all the rest." The paradox, of course, is that this well-born, fortunate woman has for 30 years been turning out books on some of the most atrocious and heartbreaking events in history. But the paradox is less baffling once we keep in mind that Tuchman thinks of herself, in her own words, as "a child of the '30s."

TUCHMAN'S STYLE of history does things that historians and chroniclers have been doing for millennia. The attachment to vivid, emblematic details surrounding some epic series of events, giving the feeling of an eyewitness account, goes back at least to Herodotus, as does the attachment to epic itself. Tuchman's insistence on fidelity to the details, right down to the weather on any given day, is an old conceit of the Renaissance. Her satiric flourishes have a Voltairean flavor, and her periodic epigrammatic asides on the human condition might have come from any of the better-known British historians of the past 250 years. Nor is there anything new about a tragic view of the past.

Still, hers is not an easy achievement. The deployment of telling details—weaving together disparate little stories into a larger whole—courts literary perils, not the least of which is a hollow facticity. Moving from the specific to the general and back again, while keeping the story line clear, is tricky. Epigrams are fine so long as they avoid sounding like clichés, which is rare. The tragic mode, though venerable, is also vulnerable. Leaping from the horrors of the past to vast generalizations about man's inhumanity to man invites reductionism. Moreover, tragic historical lessons do not sit comfortably with American readers. From Bancroft onward, American tastes in history have tended to run to the more optimistic strain embodied in the mainline liberal and radical traditions. History, we like to think, is about change; and change, we like to think, is about progress. It takes a crafty scholar like Tuchman to provoke us to think, even for a moment, that we may be wrong, that perhaps all really is vanity and there is no new thing under the sun.

If we view Tuchman's history from another angle, however, it seems to be of a piece with her earlier experiences and writings. She imbues every page of her historical work with the spirit of the secularized liberal Judaism she was raised in, with its fixation on Culture, Enlightenment, Good Taste. Just as striking are the connections between her style of history and journalism. Attention to the particular is as much a journalist's device as a historian's. It should come as no surprise that Tuchman has relied on press dispatches and memoirs for some of her most dramatic vignettes. Satire, too, is a journalist's standby, which Tuchman tried out in the *Nation* in 1936, in a send-up of an imaginary meeting of FDR, Hitler, Stalin, and other world leaders.

Even the taste for epic has its links to journalism—or at least to the international journalism of the years from the approach of World War I to the end of World War II. It is sometimes difficult, in this day of satellite communications and prepackaged sound bites, to remember what it was like to cover the world, or any small patch of it, 50 years ago. Not only was it more difficult to get to a story and to report it (there were no airbuses to Peking); the entire shape of world politics looked different, amid the breakup of old imperial Europe, the rush of revolutions, global financial collapse, and the rise of fascism. One could sense, as few mainstream journalists seem able to sense today, the interconnectedness of world events, and then display it on the front page. More important, perhaps, there was a sense of historical movement and context, of how the events of the recent (if not the distant) past led to the present, a sense that is virtually lost in a world where the historical memory of the average journalist seems to run to about two weeks. Add to that even a modicum of political intelligence and moral commitment, and it's easy to see why a young staffer at the *Nation* in the 1930s would be drawn eventually to history on a grand scale.

IT'S ALSO EASY to see why she would turn to tragic themes, particularly relating to power politics and diplomacy. Virtually all of Tuchman's historical writings revolve around a specific kind of drama: how the forces of good rose up, only to be crushed by realpolitik, and then (in some instances) to be transformed into some dictatorial form of radicalism like communism. The drama is there in her studies of the coming of the First World War, implicitly in *The Guns of August*, explicitly in *The Proud Tower*. It is there in the Stilwell book, drawn from Tuchman's early experiences at the IPR and at the OWI. It is even there in *A Distant Mirror*, her study of the 14th century, in the bloody suppression of the French *jacquerie*, the defeat of Florence's *popolo minuto*, and the failed uprising of the English peasants in 1381. "Every working-class insurrection was crushed," Tuchman

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wrote near the end of that book. It is a strange choice of words, seemingly more appropriate to Barcelona in 1937 than to the peasants and craftsmen of 14th-century Europe.

This historian, in other words, has been engaged in applying and reapplying the lessons she learned from the fall of the Spanish Loyalists. This has involved skipping over certain topics with which she once identified closely. Some of Tuchman's early interests—the British Empire, Asian affairs, Jewish matters—have become the subjects of entire books. So have the European origins of global conflict—but in 1914, not 1939. Tuchman once observed that she found it difficult to write contemporary history: "Anger, disgust, and a sense of injustice can make some writers eloquent and evoke brilliant polemic, but these emotions stunted and twisted my pen." We will probably never read a history of the Spanish Civil War by Barbara Tuchman.

NOW TUCHMAN has been able, finally, to write a full-length study of American history. Not, to be sure, of America in the '30s; nor a history of the United States in isolation from the rest of the world. Rather, she offers what she calls "a view of the American Revolution"—a view, it turns out, through the lenses of Anglo-Dutch relations, Franco-American diplomacy, and the history of the American Navy. (Spain still seems to cause her difficulty; although the Spanish alliance proved important to the American rebels, Tuchman slights it.) The book will surprise and instruct those who still think that 1776 and all that was strictly a contest between redcoats and patriots. *The First Salute* is a familiar Tuchman performance, in style, substance, and temperament. The twists come when she has to reflect, once again, on the historical role of realpolitik.

The main points of the story are simply related. On November 16, 1776, the governor of the tiny Dutch Caribbean island of St. Eustatius, on his own initiative, offered a cannon salute to an American brig-of-war that had sailed into his harbor; it was the first recognition of the American flag and American nationhood by an official of a foreign power. More than four years later, forces of the British navy, under the command of Adm. Sir George Rodney, sacked and plundered St. Eustatius, which in the intervening years had been a critical entrepôt

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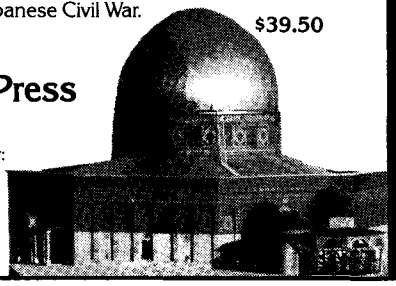

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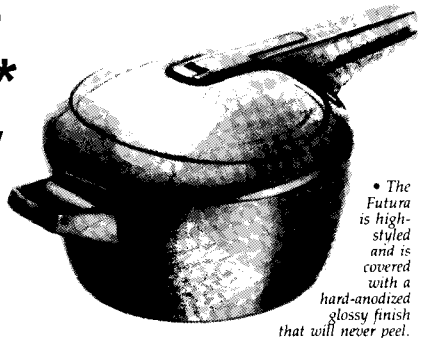

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for supplying the American armies. Roughly three months after that, the same Admiral Rodney, head of British naval operations in the West Indies, failed to give chase to a French fleet commanded by Adm. François de Grasse, leaving de Grasse and his men free to head north to Chesapeake Bay, where they would play a decisive role in defeating the British at Yorktown.

It amounts, largely, to an offshore view of the American Revolution. The alienated internationalist, Tuchman can only approach her country gradually. The action doesn't really settle on the North American mainland until about page 187, more than halfway through the book. Which, of course, is the whole point. If nothing else, *The First Salute* imparts two big lessons: that the Revolution was an event in international affairs and international naval warfare as well as a struggle for American independence, and that the birth of our republic, along with the age of revolution that followed, was shaped by 18th-century power politics.

GETTING THROUGH the book, though, is not a smooth voyage, especially during the opening chapters. There are gaffes and miscalculations. I began to notice something seriously awry when I reached a familiar-sounding paragraph about the American ship *Andrew Doria* at the start of Chapter 4, only to find the same lines almost verbatim back in Chapter 1. In more serious ways, Tuchman's mastery of her familiar devices seems less in evidence here than ever before. Ancillary details have a way of growing into entire paragraphs. (It is nice to know that Margaret Manny, a Philadelphia milliner, prepared a flag for the Continental Navy in 1775 out of 49 yards of broad bunting and 52½ yards of the narrow width, but in this context it is not exactly telling.) Minor errors creep in, too, particularly when Tuchman writes about ships and navies; a few summers on an island in Maine are enough to show me that Tuchman's knowledge of these matters (drawn largely from Alfred Thayer Mahan and Samuel Eliot Morison, with a dash of Errol Flynn) is sketchy.

When the more familiar and decisive events surrounding the French intervention and the war in America take over, the book improves. Tuchman's prose gets brisker on the path to Yorktown; the distractions dwindle down; most of the Arbuthnot-like platitudes fall by the wayside. Some of her random observations (on things like Loyalism and the class-war aspects of the Revolution) are not only pertinent; they cut through the academic gobbledygook that has built up over the years about our supposedly well-mannered, peaceful, conservative, unrevolutionary Revolution. After reading Tuchman's brief account of the British raid on Connecticut in 1779, or her story of the slaughter of one Benjamin English, it is hard to forget how cruel the fighting became, especially in its later years.

Yet there is much to quarrel with in some of Tuchman's judgments, especially about the details behind things like the French alliance. The book as a whole is far too anecdotal and too subjective in its interpretation of events. It is appalling to see a distinguished historian rely so blithely on outdated secondary sources, and overlook so much of the writing of the last 20 years (by such scholars as Jesse Lemisch, Daniel Baugh, John Creswell, and Jonathan Dull). And Tuchman has a tendency to invest some of her choice episodes with more symbolic significance than they can bear. Consider Rodney's decision not to pursue de Grasse; while it might be true, in a way, that this "critical moment of decision-making" proved a "determining point" in the Revolution, one might just as easily choose something else to be all-important, like the British Cabinet's ineptitude, born of complacency, in letting de Grasse's fleet leave European waters in the first place.

HOW DOES this book, with all its inadequacies, fit in with Tuchman's understanding of history? Obviously, in its stress on the primacy of international diplomacy, the significance of events seemingly at the margin (St. Eustatius in 1776, Sarajevo in 1914), and the brutality and cynicism of power politics, it fits quite neatly. But there is a huge difference. Earlier, Tuchman's overriding concern was with the defeat of the forces of good. Now Tuchman tells a tale in which realpolitik came, in the end, to ensure the rebels' success. More, this is a story with an additional irony: the financial costs of power politics (in the form of French debts run up to aid the Americans) eventually helped seal the doom of Europe's ancien regime. The basic elements are the same, in short, but the plot and the outcome are almost exactly the reverse.

Has Tuchman decided to redress an imbalance? Has she come to see a virtue in realpolitik? Hardly. In an essay titled "Mankind's Better Moments," which appeared in 1980, Tuchman observed that though "we have learned to expect ambition, greed, or corruption to reveal itself behind every public act . . . it is not invariably so." She finds self-sacrifice and political nobility in the American Revolution—but among the revolutionaries, not among the potentates and the munitions suppliers who helped them win. It was almost a happy accident that the international situation in the 1770s and 1780s joined together the fate of the Americans and the short-term interests of Louis XVI—an accident made all the happier because, in 1789, it would come back to haunt Louis and all the kings and aristocrats of Europe. The point here is that realpolitik is not so much immoral (the outraged liberal view, not unlike Barbara Wertheim's view of 1939) as it is amoral (the much shrewder view). Throughout much of history, that very amorality has served to snuff out some of mankind's better moments. Once in a while, though, because it knows no principle larger than the pursuit of perceived self-interest, power politics has aided excellent causes, with all sorts of ironic results.

WHAT DOES this say, however, about Tuchman's reckoning with America? Has the brokenhearted liberal of 1939 gradually come to realize that we really are the grand and glorious people our politicians and other ostentatious patriots say we are? Again, hardly. In the final pages of *The First Salute*, Tuchman looks back on the Revolution's legacy (including the legacy of justice, equality, and self-government she prizes as highly as any flag-waver) and concludes that it was compromised from the start, and has been squandered by the generations since:

> At the end of the 20th century we see in that proud design a more somber story, of injustice toward native Americans evicted from their lands, of inequality for those born of different colors and faiths, of government not by the best but by a collection of shoddy and peccant men, inept and corrupt yet always laced with workers and dreamers of a change for the better.

In 1988 Tuchman still looks out on our jingoist hoopla and it sends a shiver down her spine. There is much that she finds good in America; it is a home for immigrants and a place where laws have helped protect the poor and indigent. But these are not enough to justify our

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proud and wishful thinking. Tuchman hits on the central pathos of American history without descending into sentimentality. To be able to own the ambiguity of America's highest professed ideals and the realities of the nation's past and present, without trashing the one or ignoring the other, is too rare a skill these days.

WHICH IS not to say that Tuchman's disillusioned liberalism and her score-settling with America aren't worth arguing with. Tuchman slips far too easily into tragedy and irony; by now it looks more like a bathetic escape from the past than an attempt to grapple with it. As for America, it is too narrow a view that beholds our history and finds its politics laced only with workers and dreamers for change mingled with inept and peccant men. A wider view would take into greater account those seemingly endless struggles by others: the entire American radical dissenting tradition. Without the ebb and flow of these popular movements, from the artisan radicals and rebellious slaves of Jefferson's day to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, the workers and dreamers would hardly have had a chance, or would have trimmed their dreams to fit what they deemed predictable and safe.

I do not mean to wax romantic, '30s-style, about The People. Often enough, The People (and their supposed leaders) have believed and uttered crackpot, hateful things; witness the anti-black strain in some populist movements, or the anti-Semitic strain in others, or the totalitarian strain in others. And it may well be that, without a fortuitous assist from the forces of realpolitik, the odds for social justice in America are extremely long. (The Emancipation Proclamation is a case in point, a document that spurred slavery's demise but originated in part to mollify the British government and keep it out of the Civil War.) Still, to slight the broader dissenting tradition and all its achievements—a slight of which many disillusioned liberals of the '30s, in their flight from revolution, have been guilty—is to lose sight of what makes us different from, and in many ways better than, the America of 1781, and all the reasons why. It is to skirt the kind of Burkean pessimism that America's greatest democrats, from Paine on, have had to fight so hard to dispel.

Conference of Liberal and Progressive Jewish Intellectuals

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The rich, left culture of American Jewish intellectuals was a casualty partly because of the Cold War, McCarthyism, and the general shift to the right; but partly, also, of the insensitivity that left movements showed towards legitimate Jewish concerns. In the 1980s a Jewish renewal movement, finding its clearest expression in ***TIKKUN*** Magazine, has proudly reclaimed the Jewish tradition—while simultaneously rejecting the conservatism, conformism, and intellectual emptiness that dominates within the organized Jewish community.

Our concerns are not limited to narrowly-defined "Jewish issues"—both in ***TIKKUN*** and at the conference we address the central intellectual, political, and cultural issues of our time. If you can't come to the conference, join these discussions by subscribing to ***TIKKUN*** Magazine.

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Still, as disillusioned liberalisms go, Tuchman's is not ignoble. Just look around. There is the kind of disillusionment that brags about its newfound nationalism and noisily proclaims the virtues of cold war realpolitik. There is the kind of disillusionment that creates new illusions, like the one about Adolfo Calero being George Washington. There is the disillusioned liberalism that believes Reaganomics and Bushonomics are really about making life better for working people. There is even a species of disillusionment that now contends the right side won the Spanish Civil War. Barbara Tuchman, child of the '30s, is too tough-minded and too stoic to fall for any of that.

SEAN WILENTZ

Sean Wilentz teaches history at Princeton University.

SOAPSTUDS

The Great Divide: Second Thoughts on the American Dream by Studs Terkel

(Pantheon, 439 pp., $18.95)

Twenty-odd years ago, when Studs Terkel embarked on a wildly successful second career as an itinerant interviewer and compiler of interviews, the open mike was not yet the lazy habit it has become for journalists and historians. When *Division Street* was published in 1967, its use of the verbatim technique, or "oral history," seemed a novel way to portray Richard Daley's Chicago, and not a labor-saving gimmick. Although the author didn't analyze the heap he gathered in any intelligent way, he exhibited a friendly curiosity about "non-celebrated people," from housewives to hoodlums, and possessed a talent, since much remarked upon, for drawing them out. Beginning with pollsterish inquiries about issues of the day (Vietnam, civil rights, and "The Bomb"), the free-associative Terkel also asked what would happen to Christ if he came back to earth.

To his credit, Terkel didn't pretend that such unfiltered talk amounted to more than pop sociology: "guerrilla journalism," he called it. The primary value of his book, he suggested in a brief introduction, lay simply in giving voice to those you don't often hear talking. But critics, more enamored of Terkel's gruff persona and populist sympathies than by a book that was, like all the books that followed, a trial to get through, greeted *Division Street* as much more than that. It was judged to be a profound investigation into the state of the nation's soul, a masterful evocation of the prose, if not the poetry, of ordinary men and women. And so began the pattern whereby Terkel's compendiums of what a better journalist might consider the raw material for a book were hailed as inspired and significant. The books' ever-increasing length, pretension, and lack of focus were no obstacle to praise; their very undigestedness, reviewers often pointed out, made them accurate versions of America. Terkel himself, traversing the country with his tape recorder, has come to be considered a kind of folk-hero: "America's Diogenes," according to a recent profile.

That comparison is monumentally inapt. The skepticism about his fellow citizens that characterized the Diogenes of Athens is antithetical to the faith in the average man professed by this Diogenes of the Windy City in a red-checked shirt. Terkel can hardly find a dishonest man for trying. He lives by a Progressive belief in the intrinsic goodness and decency of most people, which doesn't appear to unsettle his dogmatic insistence that American society is bigoted, ignorant, and greedy. Terkel loves Americans and loathes America.

To understand that trick of dissonance, it is necessary to consider what Terkel has written about the 1930s, the decade that formed his political outlook and still defines the way he sees America. His vision of the period is fundamentally nostalgic. In his memoir *Talking to Myself* (1977), Terkel recalled that despite the breadlines of 1934 there was a "salubrious note in the air" and a feeling of "lifted spirits." Although he has the usual trouble pinning down the "something" he is talking about, he often refers to the spirit of "an age of astonishing innocence." The innocence, however, was all his own, and many of his contemporaries', about politics. Terkel longs for the time when "Which Side Are You On?" was the only question you had to ask about someone's politics. He has never recovered from the loss of the dichotomies of the United Front: strikers and Pinkertons, the New Deal and Hooverism, Senator LaFollette and Father Coughlin. What emerges from the chapter of *Hard Times* (1970) devoted to reds and pinks is not only the author's nostalgia for a time of revolutionary possibilities, but more specifically, his nostalgia for an era in which the unified left constituted a powerful political force and no one in its ranks doubted the direction the country was headed.

The idea of a hopeful struggle against inhuman economic and social forces is Terkel's recurring theme. For him, *The Grapes of Wrath* is a great portrait of the age, even if its wretched blame themselves rather than the system. The Depression refers to a "sharing among many of the dispossessed," where those with very little pitch in to help the worst-off among them. In Terkel's view, as in Preacher Casy's, even bigots, cheats, and fools will seem good at heart, when you understand a little about their problems and the forces that have shaped them.

One story in *Hard Times* has a society lady wearing a gown made of $1,000 bills to a Beaux Arts Ball. Whether this actually happened Terkel never says. Nor does he second-guess the Indiana miner or the Wisconsin schoolteacher who says we were on the verge of a bloody revolution. Most historians, of course, would tell you that these assessments are false; but Terkel prefers the ideal vision of the capitalist system broken-down, about to be overthrown, before it was salvaged by the New Deal. If he can't get away with the bald assertion of such a view in his own voice, he can still create a consensus in its favor by grouping together the memories of average folk who think it was so.

SINCE THE slightest analytical rigor would unmask the idealized, two-dimensional image of the past that Terkel slyly promotes, he must avoid it at all costs. Addressing the accuracy of his respondents' memories in *Hard Times*, Terkel casually muses:

> Are they telling the truth? The question is as academic as the day Pilate asked it, his

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philosophy not quite washing out his guilt. It's the question Pa Joad asked of Preacher Casy, when the ragged man, in a transient camp, poured out his California agony.

"Pa said, 'S'pose he's telling the truth—that fella?' The preacher answered, 'He's tellin' the truth, awright. The truth for him. He wasn't makin' nothin' up.' 'How about us?' Tom demanded. 'Is that the truth for us?' 'I don't know,' said Casy."

I suspect the preacher spoke for the people in this book, too. In their rememberings are their truths. The precise fact or the precise date is of small consequence. This is not a lawyer's brief nor an annotated sociological treatise. It is simply an attempt to get the story of the holocaust known as The Great Depression from an improvised battalion of survivors.

This is a clever exemption from intellectual responsibility. Memory is, as the new critical jargon might say, privileged. What is true for rememberers is higher than what is true for historians, with their niggling questions about "hard fact and precise statistic." Grammatical warts intact, the "popular conception" is placed beyond the reach of those who write in complete, elitist sentences. The anti-intellectual bias of such a practice is only thinly disguised.

TERKEL IS, surely, the nation's foremost mythographer; but he calls his books "oral histories." It is important to distinguish them, therefore, from the legitimate social history of which they are the reductio ad absurdum. The goal of social history has always been to reveal a past neglected by traditional historians, who seem more attuned to the lives of institutions than the lives of individuals; to show the slaves as well as the pharaohs. Oral history, of course, is a perfectly valid tool in this kind of research, but it, too, must have its methodological standards. It must start, for example, from the understanding that people remember badly, that memory is a form of selective forgetting. A rememberer's report is only half the oral historian's work; the other half is its correction by what he knows from other sources.

But Terkel, who interviews those who weren't there as well as those who were, is interested not in the past, but in what can be made out of the past. His voices and stories are designed to promote a series of myths that are of greater political utility to him than complex historical truths. *This* method is not oral history. It might be called folk history, if it is to be called history at all.

Instances of this crudified past abound

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Those "Moderate" Arab States

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Should we sell sophisticated armaments to the so-called "moderate" Arab countries? Recently, Saudi Arabia, usually considered the leader of the "moderate" Arabs, turned to Britain for the biggest arms contract ever. Many are concerned that the U.S. Congress, being reluctant to allow unlimited arms sales to the Arabs, is depriving the U.S. of lucrative business.

What are the facts?

■ The Arab states boast today one of the largest, most deadly and most sophisticated concentration of armament the world has ever seen, surpassed only (and not by all that much) by the arsenals of the two super-powers. And the buildup of arms continues incessantly—making one wonder how these essentially backward countries can possibly absorb and utilize all this weaponry. Excepting the oil-rich Gulf countries, most of these Arab states can fairly be described as economic basket cases, with social and demographic problems that seem almost unsolvable. Still, they dedicate a large share of their meager resources to the acquisition of ever more deadly and offensive weaponry, instead of putting them into the service of building their countries and uplifting their populations.

■ Saudi Arabia, the kingpin of the "moderates," is an immensely wealthy but sparsely populated country. It fields an army of only 72,000 men, but has 190 military planes and 550 tanks—just about the largest ratio of military hardware to military manpower in the world. Until recently, the fiction was maintained that it needed this enormous arsenal in order to defend itself against the "threat of Iran." But now that Iran is prostrate, this can no longer be alleged, and even the most naive no longer believe it. As King Khaled put it quite bluntly: "When we build our military power, we have no designs on anybody, except those who took away our land and the holy places in Jerusalem, and we know who they are!

■ "Moderate" Saudi Arabia has participated in every war against Israel, from the birth of the state in 1948. It has never made peace with Israel. It is the principal paymaster of Syria, Israel's most fervent enemy, and of the PLO, which is sworn to the destruction of Israel. It is the main player in the worldwide Arab boycott of Israel, whose purpose is the destruction of Israel's economy. Yet, Saudi Arabia, already armed to the teeth and beyond, has just acquired batteries of super missiles from China. They can reach every point in Israel within minutes and can be armed with chemical and atomic warheads. And Saudi Arabia has squadrons of fighter planes at its air base in Tobruk, just one minute's flying time from Israel.

■ But Saudi Arabia's "defense" needs are insatiable. It has just concluded an arms deal with Great Britain amounting to $27 billion, the largest ever negotiated by that country. It includes at least 40 Tornado fighter planes, 80 Westland helicopters, a minimum of six Sundown minesweepers, the construction of two major air bases, and much more. It is an enormous package and has only one purpose: to be part of the coordinated force that, it is hoped, will eventually destroy Israel. The remarkable thing is that Britain will not sell any arms to Israel, because it feels that it could "destabilize the region."

■ But those bare statistics refer only to some of the so-called "moderates." Including the self-proclaimed non-moderates, tiny Israel, the size of New Jersey, with 90% of its population concentrated in an area the size of metropolitan Indianapolis, faces one of the most daunting and fearsome military machines the world has ever seen. Counting only Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Egypt, Israel faces 17,265 tanks, 2789 combat aircraft and 3 million armed men. And that is before the huge sale of military material by Britain, missile deals with the Chinese, and other weaponry in the pipeline.

The concept of the "moderate" Arab states is a myth. The Arabs are single-mindedly determined to destroy Israel. They are spending hundreds of billions of dollars in order to attain strategic superiority to Israel, and then to accomplish its destruction. Israel is the only viable strategic asset the United States has in the entire area. Those who sell weapons to Israel's enemies—foreign countries and American companies—are playing into the hands of America's enemies. We do not find the Soviet Union selling weapons to the enemies of *its* allies. Why should the United States be any less straightforward in its foreign policy? If Israel were vanquished, the Persian Gulf with its vital resources, the entire Middle East and the Mediterranean Basin would fall under the unquestioned dominion of the Soviet Union.

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in Terkel's recent books about the American present. In 1980 he published an anthology of 100 varied voices, *American Dreams: Lost and Found*. The point of the book seemed to be that despite the thinness and venality of American popular culture and political life, the old "something" was "happening" beneath the veneer of the Me Decade:

> There are signs, unmistakable, of an astonishing increase in the airing of grievances: of private wrongs and public rights. The heralds are from all sorts of precincts: a family farmer, a blue-collar wife, a whistle-blowing executive.... A long-buried American tradition may be springing back to life.

His new book, *The Great Divide: Second Thoughts on the American Dream*, includes more of the same. Found again, amid the dross of Reagan's superficial, self-interested, money-mad America, is the same saving remnant, representing the same ineffable "something." Terkel writes: "In my prowlings and stalkings during these past three years, I've come across individuals, surprising in number though diffident in demeanor (call them the gentle people, if you wish), who are challenging the official idea." The "official idea" is, presumably, Reaganism, but it is stretched to include other things that Terkel deplores: sound bites, union-bashing, the profit motive, the cold war, historical ignorance. It is represented by a greed-addled broker, a brainless socialite, a Ku Klux Klan member. In the other corner, however, are the "gentle people," who constitute a much larger group: crusading neighborhood activists, radical priests, dispossessed farmers, strikers, and a physicist who refused to work on nuclear weapons, among others. A kinder, gentler America.

Terkel's people are straight out of central casting. Farmers say they are scratchin' out a livin'; commodities speculators brag about sitting on a mountain of money, made without lifting a finger. The strikers stand on principle; the scabs have no principles to defend. Terkel seems unable to re-examine the dogma that categorizes these types of virtue and vice incarnate, even when the strikers are millionaire football players and the farmers are getting rich off corporate welfare.

THE "great divide" is what lies between these two classes of Americans. It is a boundary that runs invisibly through America, separating the big-hearted from the small-minded, the righteous and the holy who ride "This Train," in the words of a favorite spiritual, from the liars, the pocket pickers, and the bar flyers whom the train doesn't carry. Representative men and women are paired off. A brief chapter called "Ayn Rand and the Trucker" juxtaposes the Rand moonie Barbara Brandon with the worthy trucker Sam Talbert, who refuses to be intimidated from organizing a dissident local Teamsters for a Democratic Union. Brandon praises selfishness; Talbert speaks, with the inarticulate eloquence typical of the people Terkel lionizes, of his own generosity, and the generosity of others.

The author, again, is clever enough to appear to stand off while his heroes and villains write their own profiles. But really he is busy with loaded questions, busy trying to prod his subjects into political stands. Instead of the one about Christ coming back to earth, Terkel now seems to be asking: If drafted, would you fight in Nicaragua? Most say they wouldn't, which makes them opponents of the official idea. You forget for a moment that nobody has tried to send them to Nicaragua. But many of Terkel's subjects don't need to be provoked into dissent, since most of them have been chosen for their stance against "the system."

THE GREATEST heroes of all, for Terkel, are the previously quiescent or apathetic who suddenly become radicalized, perhaps without understanding exactly what they are doing. One such is the defrocked Lutheran pastor Douglas Roth, who decided that the Mellon Bank of Pittsburgh was the root of "corporate evil" in his area. Terkel lauds him for leading his steel-town church group to fill the bank's safe deposit boxes with blocks of frozen fish, and later going to jail for his principles, whatever they were. The real saint in the book, though, is Jean Gump, a.k.a. #03789-045, a Catholic grandmother cheerily serving six years in a federal penitentiary for breaking into an Army missile site in Missouri and attacking a Minuteman silo with blood and spray paint. Soon after she was jailed, her husband, Joe, arose from his own torpor and broke into another site with the same baby bottles of blood. The views of the Gumps, which close the book, are explicitly endorsed (at last) by Terkel. Hers, for example:

> We have to hate the Iranians, 'cause we have to go over there and kill 'em. I had to hate the Vietnamese people. I have to hate the commies. Everybody has to hate the commies. There is no end to my nation's enemies. But I don't think they're my enemies.

Anybody who could say that is either hopelessly naive or a dangerous crackpot. Terkel, however, finds spiritual uplift.

BEYOND ITS anti-market sentiment, the major complaint of *The Great Divide* is that we, particularly the young, are ignorant about the past. Of course, he is right; Americans don't care to know history well. But then neither does Terkel. At least Allan Bloom's objection about the ignorance of history was a pure worry about what the young weren't learning. Terkel's worry is political: he's angry that people don't remember the history that entails his United Front view of the world. When he says we are slipping into a "collective Alzheimer's disease," he's not worried about the imprecision of our knowledge of the Hitler-Stalin pact or Alger Hiss. He's angry that we have forgotten a "lesson," specifically, the lesson of the Great Depression that capitalism leads inevitably to economic catastrophe. He is also disturbed that that the Second World War is "misremembered," since many forget that the Soviet Union was our ally. (One measure of Terkel's tendentiousness is the quotation marks around the title of his book about the Second World War, *"The Good War."*) Terkel has an agenda; some bits of the past seem more worthy of memory than others.

With his ability to make the public respond to a mythical vision of an ennobled past, Terkel has much in common with a contemporary of his who also started out as an Illinois radio announcer: Ronald Reagan. Like Reagan, Terkel draws principally on vague memories and cinematic images of tough times. Like Reagan, he is taken in by his own illusions about the comparative decency and simplicity of everyday life, and basks in the reflected glory of carefully chosen heroes. Both men capture, of course, something authentically American. But their pretensions to provide a portrait of the country and its history can be jointly dismissed. Terkel says that he is constantly astonished by what he finds in his travels across the country. I can't imagine why. Time after time, he finds just what he was looking for.

JACOB WEISBERG

Jacob Weisberg, a former TNR reporter-researcher, is a graduate student in politics at New College, Oxford.

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THE ALRIGHTNIK OF ARIZONA

Goldwater
by Barry M. Goldwater with Jack Casserly

(Doubleday, 414 pp., $21.95)

Barry Goldwater has now "written" two autobiographies. *With No Apologies*, published in 1979, was "drawn together" by former aide Steve Shadegg. *Goldwater* was written "with" Jack Casserly, a former newsman and Ford administration official. *Goldwater* is more fun to read because Goldwater has once again become controversial. He flays Republican as well as Democratic colleagues (Senator D'Amato puts "himself and his home state ahead of his country"; Senator Dole "doesn't have the leadership qualities that his job as minority leader requires") and expresses his contempt for PACs, political consultants, and right-wing televangelists.

But except for the most recent events, the new autobiography covers the old ground, and in exactly the same manner. Like other autobiographies drawn together for politicians, *Goldwater* attempts to display its subject, not to understand it. The book provides colorful anecdotes, press conference invective, and campaign boilerplate about the threat of communism, but it carefully skirts the doubts and the inconsistencies that plague a man's life, that provide the key to understanding his character.

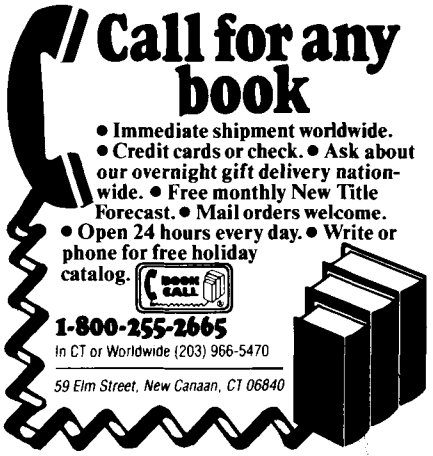
That's too bad, because whether or not he is capable of writing his own autobiography, Goldwater deserves to have his story told. He was the political leader of 1954-66, post-McCarthy, pre-Reagan conservatism, or what is now referred to as the "old right." He was also its most representative figure, exemplifying conservatism's spread to the ethnic north and the Sunbelt, and its abandonment of isolationism and anti-Semitism. His presidential campaign of 1964 was a turning point in recent American politics. And he is a fascinating character whose habits and mores stand in sharp contrast to those of most politicians.

Goldwater's paternal grandparents were Polish Jews, who immigrated to the United States during the gold rush. "Big Mike" Goldwater started a combination bordello-saloon in Sonora, California. Mike and Sarah's children eventually made their way to Arizona, where Goldwater's uncle Morris became the mayor of Prescott, and where Goldwater's father, Baron, became the owner and manager of a Phoenix department store. Baron's parents kept trying to mate him with a Jewish girl, but he stubbornly resisted. After they died, he married Josephine Williams, a Midwestern Episcopalian who had come to Phoenix for her health. Barry, born in 1909, was raised as an Episcopalian. He was sent to Staunton, a socially prestigious military school in Virginia that accepted Jewish students. (My grandfather sent my father there.) Barry went to the University of Arizona but dropped out only a year later when his father died, and joined the family business.

Like other second-generation Jewish Americans, Baron Goldwater seems to have been intent on being seen as an "American" rather than a "Jew." He fulfilled this ambition with his son. "Neither my father nor any of our family ever took any part in the Jewish community . . .," Goldwater writes in his autobiography. "I never got used to being singled out in that way. . . . I'm proud of my ancestors and heritage. I've simply never practiced the Jewish faith or seen myself or our family as primarily of the Jewish culture. In the jargon of today's sociologists, we've been assimilated. We're Americans."

Goldwater says very little in either autobiography about his Jewish background, but it is probably a key to understanding the kind of conservative he became. For Goldwater, being a conservative and a Republican was an expression of successful assimilation. Morris and Baron Goldwater were Democrats. During Prohibition, Baron, a "wet" Democrat, bought a local bar and had it installed in his basement. By contrast, Josephine Goldwater was a staunch Midwestern Republican. Goldwater was not only raised in his mother's religion, he also adopted her political party.

But Goldwater's Jewish background marked him off from the conservatives of his day. Before World War II, the American right was largely composed of Midwestern WASPs, many of whom dis-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liked Jews and Catholics. A strong nativist and isolationist strand ran through the Republican right. With his Jewish immigrant ancestry, Goldwater could never share the right's nativism. Nor could he share its isolationism. In his first autobiography, Goldwater wrote that he came to fear Hitler well before the outbreak of the war because he recalled how his ancestors had been driven from Poland by anti-Semitism. While the right was organizing in 1940-41 against American entry into the war, Goldwater was volunteering in the Army Air Corps and cheering on Franklin Roosevelt's efforts at rearmament. Later, appearing to confuse American isolationists with English advocates of appeasement, he even blamed the war on isolationists. "The major political conviction I took from the conflict," he wrote, "was that it never would have erupted if the United States had remained militarily strong in the 1920s and 1930s. I'd never be an isolationist."

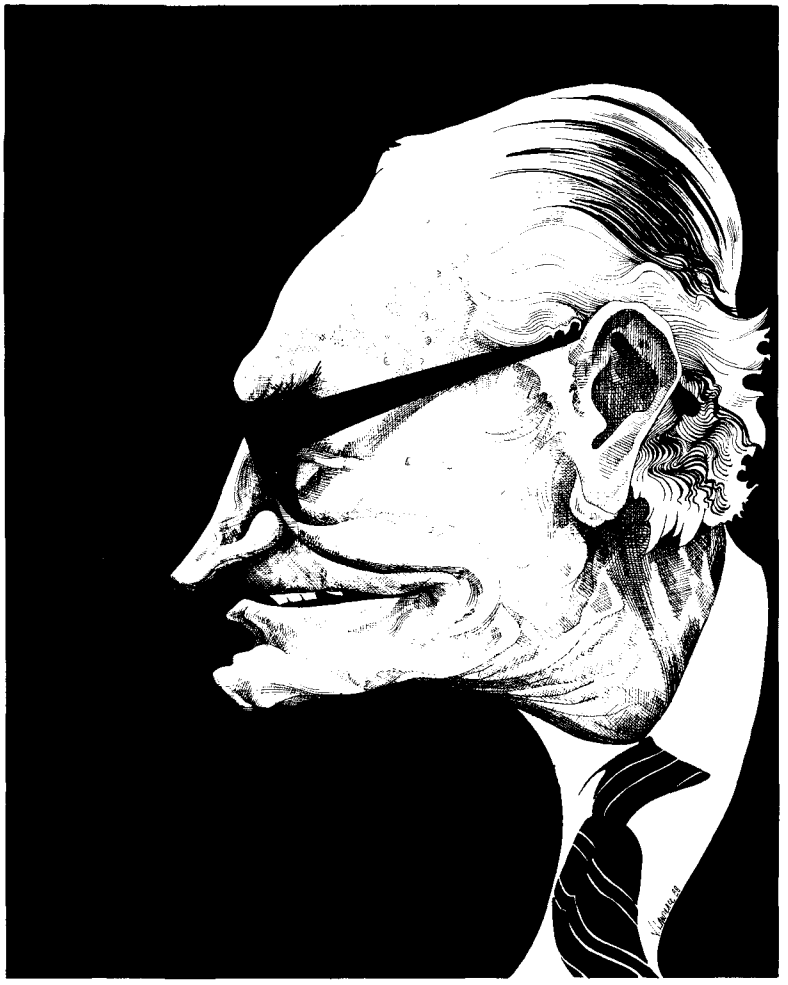
Goldwater's foreign policy views were based upon an identification between Nazism and communism. He conflated the dangers of appeasement with the dangers of isolationism. In the 1952 Republican primaries, Goldwater backed the internationalist Dwight Eisenhower against Senator Robert Taft, the candidate of the Republicans' dwindling isolationist wing. During the Eisenhower years, he also supported the administration's foreign policy, including its establishment of an elaborate system of overseas alliances—precisely the kind of ventures that would have disturbed the pre-war right.

Goldwater began to identify himself as a Republican conservative because of his views on domestic, rather than foreign, policy. As the owner of a prosperous Western department store, he acquired the anti-union, anti-Eastern, anti-big government, highly individualistic politics of his class and his region. According to one Goldwater associate, his famous threat to saw off the Eastern seaboard and let it float out to sea reflected his experience in the '30s when Goldwater, visiting the East, found that New York banks would not cash his Arizona checks.

He got his start in politics after World War II when he participated in a statewide campaign for a right-to-work law. When he became a senator in 1952, he was a member of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, where he insisted that United Auto Workers' Walter Reuther was a greater menace to freedom than the Teamsters' Jimmy Hoffa or the Soviet-led world Communist conspiracy. "I would rather have Hoffa stealing my money than Reuther stealing my freedom," Goldwater said in one speech. "Reuther is more dangerous than the sputniks or anything Russia might do."

When Goldwater broke with the Eisenhower administration, it was not over foreign policy, but over the administration's unwillingness to scale back the New Deal. Goldwater described one Eisenhower budget as a "dime store New Deal." At the Western Republican Conference in 1959, Goldwater drew the difference between himself and Nelson Rockefeller, the liberal Republican governor of New York, on the grounds of domestic policy, not foreign policy. "My kind of Republican Party is committed to a free state, limited central power, a reduction in bureaucracy, and a balanced budget," he declared.

It was not until the late 1950s that Goldwater began to draw sharp distinctions between his foreign policy views and those of other Republicans, probably under the influence of *National Review* and of *National Review* editor Brent Bozell, who became an aide to Goldwater and ghosted Goldwater's book *The Conscience of a Conservative*. In this book, and in *Why Not Victory?*, which appeared in 1962, Goldwater began to advocate the "rollback" rather than the "containment" of Soviet communism, even if "rollback" required war. "Our only hope is to proclaim victory as our aim and then to press boldly and unremittingly on all fronts—always prepared to fight and making sure the Communists always know we are prepared to fight."



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

It was at the 1960 Republican convention that Goldwater became a national figure, when he denounced the "Park Avenue Compact" between Richard Nixon and Rockefeller as a "Republican Munich." As a protest candidate, Goldwater was nominated for president, and received support from South Carolina, Louisiana, and Arizona. After Nixon's defeat in November, Goldwater began considering a presidential run in 1964 against John Kennedy. At the same time, a group of conservatives, led by Clifton White and *National Review* publisher William Rusher, began independently organizing delegates for Goldwater. Goldwater was never enthusiastic about running for president, however, and after John Kennedy was assassinated, he decided

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against it. He was persuaded to change his mind by conservative senators who feared a Rockefeller takeover of the party.

As a presidential candidate, Goldwater was doomed from the start by an inexperienced campaign staff, recruited from Arizona, and by his own lack of prowess as a national politician. What makes Goldwater charming as a senator made him a disaster as a candidate. He lacked the kind of dishonesty that passes for tact. He insisted on attacking tobacco subsidies in North Carolina and the TVA in Tennessee. He wouldn't give scripted speeches and didn't like to say the same thing twice. Reporters could always goad him into what his campaign staff began to call "Goldwaterisms." Hyperbole that amused Arizona voters, like the threat to lob a nuclear weapon into the men's room at the Kremlin, frightened voters in New Hampshire or California. Although he claims in his new autobiography that the press and the Johnson campaign systematically distorted his positions, he gives himself away. "I did not say the Social Security system should be immediately junked," Goldwater protests. "It had to be done over time."

ROUTED at the polls, Goldwater nonetheless established the contours of presidential politics for the next two decades. He turned the Republican coalition on its head. Since 1896 the Republican Party had won elections by uniting the East and Midwest against the Democratic South and West. If the party made inroads in the South, it was in the predominately white border states rather than in the Deep South. It won a third to a half of the black vote. In 1964, however, Goldwater established a new Republican presence in the West and the Deep South, while abandoning the black vote altogether.

Goldwater's conservative economics and his championship of "rollback" played some role in this realignment, but the most important factor, surely, was his opposition to federal civil rights legislation. In 1964 Goldwater joined Deep South Democrats in voting against the Civil Rights Act barring discrimination in voting, public accommodations, and employment. In his autobiographies, Goldwater claims that he opposed the bill solely because it violated the provision for states' rights in the Tenth Amendment of the Constitution. But there can be little doubt that he was alive also to the political rewards that an opposition to civil rights for blacks could reap. In 1960 Goldwater had based his denunciation of the Park Avenue Compact on the strong pro-civil rights plank that Rockefeller had induced Nixon to accept; later he told Theodore White that the Rockefeller plank had cost the Republicans the election.

But during the campaign Goldwater did resist exploiting the kind of racial, or racist, themes that might have won him votes in the ethnic North as well as in the South. When black riots swept through Northern cities in the summer of 1964, Goldwater initiated an agreement with Johnson not to make the riots an issue in the election. In the campaign's last month, Goldwater also forbade the showing a film, *Choice*, that Clifton White and Rus Walton (later a leader of the Christian right) had made for the campaign. Produced under the banner of "Mothers for a Moral America," the film featured shots of black rioters, beatniks, and bare-breasted women. It was precisely the kind of appeal that Nixon would make in his "law and order" campaigns, and that George Bush introduced into the 1988 campaign. Goldwater wanted no part of it.

Goldwater's campaign of 1964, in sum, showed Republican conservatives that they could capture a major party. But it also showed them that if they wanted to win majorities, they had to modify their politics. They couldn't hint at the desirability of a pre-emptive nuclear strike or advocate the dismemberment of Social Security. They had to plumb, if subtly, the cultural backlash to civil rights and to the student movement. Ronald Reagan was the first successful post-Goldwater candidate. Running for governor of California in 1966, Reagan hired Stuart Spencer (who had managed Rockefeller's primary campaign against Goldwater); steered clear of right-wing buzzwords; and kept Goldwater out of the state during the election. It was a formula he was to repeat for the next two decades.

ALMOST the only conservative not affected by Goldwater's defeat was Goldwater. His political views have remained substantially what they were in 1964. He is like a fossil from the political past. Goldwater has never embraced the demagogic cultural appeals of Republican conservatives ("Tell George Bush to start talking about the issues," Goldwater snapped at J. Danforth Quayle). He does

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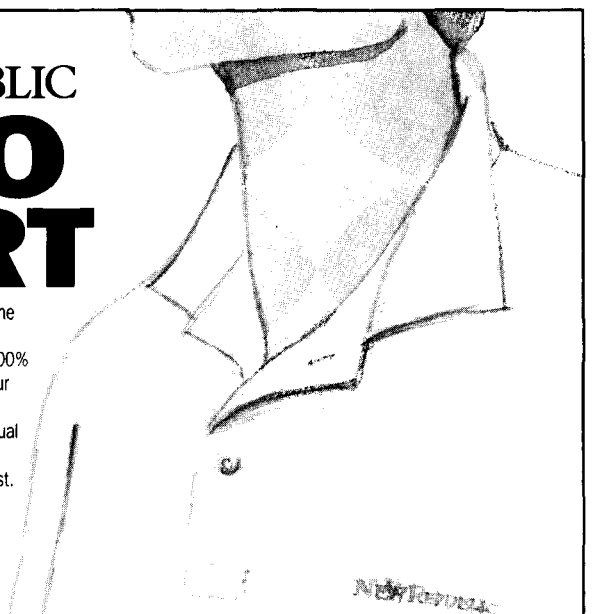

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not favor school prayer or other parts of the New Right social agenda. When Goldwater rails against the Moral Majority, he sounds like a liberal Democrat, but in fact he is expressing the frontier libertarianism that is the outlook in which he was raised. "The Moral Majority has no more right to dictate its moral and political beliefs to the country than does any another group, political or religious," Goldwater writes. This has led some conservatives (William Rusher, for example) to question whether Goldwater really is one of their own.

In a Washington overrun by lobbies and PACs, Goldwater is an extremely appealing figure. He has been candid and incorruptible, qualities one hardly associates with politicians. But Goldwater's candor has always been tied both to commendable personal standards and to a political perspective that is, at best, anachronistic and, at worst, destructive. His domestic recommendations remain perfectly appropriate to a Western boomtown in which the only minorities live on reservations.

Goldwater's foreign policy, moreover, has displayed a narrow sense of American history and purpose. It continues to be based on the analogy between communism and Nazism. Communism, like Nazism, is an indivisible threat; each communist nation is part of a greater whole. Where communism exists, Goldwater seeks to wipe it out, and the only interesting question is what military means should be employed to do so. In his autobiographies, Goldwater second-guesses Kennedy's judgment in 1961 in refusing to order air strikes during the Bay of Pigs, as if a few bombing raids could have toppled Castro, who was then riding a wave of popularity. He believes that in the Cuban missile crisis, Kennedy should have taken "the counsel of all his top advisers" and ordered "an all-out attack and invasion of Cuba."

Goldwater has his facts and his prescriptions wrong. In the White House discussions in 1961, military leaders and some former State Department officials like Dean Acheson favored an air strike against the missiles, but not an invasion. And Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Undersecretary of State George Ball, and Attorney General Robert Kennedy all argued for a blockade rather than an invasion. Robert Kennedy's arguments won the day. He voiced a historical perspective that still eludes Goldwater. Kennedy compared the surprise air strike favored by the military to Pearl Harbor. According to Arthur Schlesinger's account, Kennedy argued that "Sunday-morning surprise blows on small nations were not in our tradition. . . . We were fighting for something more than survival, and a sneak attack would constitute a betrayal of our heritage and our ideals." Goldwater also saw no moral or political ambiguity in the American pursuit of victory in Vietnam. He argues that the United States should have launched an all-out invasion of North Vietnam in 1965. "There is only one way to deal with a fierce enemy in a war, and that is to kill him," Goldwater writes in his new book.

AS CHAIRMAN of the Senate Intelligence Committee during Reagan's first term, Goldwater tried to curb some of CIA Director William Casey's excesses, but Goldwater's overall view of the CIA was very similar to Casey's: shaped by an analogy between World War II and the cold war. Goldwater saw the CIA as an extension of the OSS. In defending the CIA against its critics, he cites the World War II experience. "The free world certainly believed it necessary to maintain secrets during World War II to preserve the democratic values for which it was fighting," Goldwater writes. "If the intent is to keep us from national harm—from threats of economic injury or war—then the CIA performs a needed and, in my mind, just mission." Goldwater segues from World War II flying ace Jimmy Doolittle to the CIA. "Jimmy Doolittle and a lot of other guys with real guts were my heroes. I didn't believe God was dead. I still put my faith in country—and in the CIA, when the chips were down."

But the CIA is *not* the OSS. During World War II, the OSS was a private arm of a publicly declared war. To the extent that the cold war had widespread support, the CIA had an analogous role from 1948 to the mid-1960s. But as the consensus over foreign policy eroded, the CIA's role has changed. During both the Nixon and Reagan administrations, it served as the private arm of a private foreign policy. It kept secrets, but from the wrong people and on behalf of debatable ends. Goldwater doesn't see any of this.

Great sons of bitches can make great leaders, but essentially good men can leave a legacy of folly. Goldwater's political beliefs have been products of nostalgia rather than reflection. The same sentiments that have made him an honorable politician might have made him a dangerous leader. If his latest memoir serves any larger purpose, it is to remind us what a wonderful character Goldwater is, but also to absolve us of any guilt that remains for having voted for Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

JOHN B. JUDIS

John B. Judis is a senior editor of *In These Times* and the author of *William F. Buckley Jr.: Patron Saint of the Conservatives* (Simon and Schuster).

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

NO IDOL OF ANTI-SEMITES

To the editors:

In "Anti-Semitism, Left and Right" (October 3) TNR referred to "old-fashioned right-wing anti-Semites" nostalgic for dictators like "Hungary's Admiral Horthy." This is a slur on a man who, dictator that he was, staunchly refused to turn over Hungarian Jews for Nazi deportations and by pursuing delaying tactics for two years saved very many Jewish lives. It is only after Hungary was occupied by Nazi troops (March 1944) that the deportations got under way. Why make him an idol of anti-Semites?

RICHARD PIPES
Cambridge, Massachusetts

HISTORICAL VICES

To the editors:

In "The Vice Squad" (October 31), Nicholas von Hoffman mentioned Henry Wilson, "the Natick Cobbler," but forgot to mention that he was Senator Lloyd Bentsen's great-uncle. Actually, Wilson was born Jeremiah Jones Colbath in Farmington, New Hampshire, in 1812. After completing his indenture to a farmer, he had his name changed, moved to Natick, Massachusetts, and was apprenticed to a shoemaker—hence, the Cobbler sobriquet. He was a Know Nothing, but renounced the party, served in the U.S. Senate, and later was Grant's vice president. He died in 1875. His epitaph concludes: ". . . yet lived and died poor, and left to his grateful countrymen the memory of an honorable public service, and a good name far better than riches." This is on a bronze plaque on the wall near his bust in the formal office of the vice president in the Capitol.

JAMES K. ANDERSON
Kansas City, Missouri

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TRB, *from page 4*

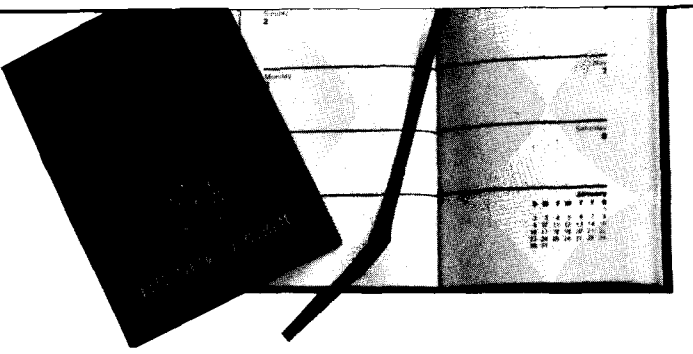
derers," as if most states didn't have one of some sort), then declare that the resulting "issue" actually touches on larger questions of "values." Well, it doesn't. A couple years from now, or even a couple months from now, we'll look back and wonder how on earth we could have squandered our valuable public discourse on matters so irrelevant to our national well-being.

This is not to excuse Dukakis. If Bush's victory was within his margin of demagoguery, Dukakis's defeat was within his margin of ineptitude. But Dukakis was trapped, not so much by George Bush as by Ronald Reagan. On the most important genuine issues, Reagan has trained the American voters to be hypocrites. It would take an extraordinary politician, which Dukakis isn't, to break successfully the ground rules Reagan has set. Mondale tried to break them and failed. Dukakis adhered to them and almost succeeded.

The obvious example is the deficit. Dukakis did his best to persuade voters that our prosperity is based on a shaky foundation of foreign borrowing. And the voters are persuadable on this point. But under the Reagan Rules—which Dukakis obeyed—you're not allowed to propose any serious solution, either raising taxes or cutting expenditures. That robbed Dukakis of his best issue.

On foreign policy, too, Reagan has taught Americans to believe that "strength" and "toughness" can be had at virtually no cost, in money or in blood. That makes it impossible to argue in any particular case (the defense build-up, the *contras*, Star Wars) either that the cost must be paid or that it's not worth paying. When Bush denounced the "liberal democratic grain embargo" that followed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Dukakis couldn't defend even this tiny sacrifice for a "tough" foreign policy. Under the Reagan Rules, he had to say lamely that he opposed the grain embargo as well.

Winning an election under the Reagan Rules, using what might henceforth be known as Bush Tactics, is one thing. Governing after such a victory is another. Reagan faced a cowed political opposition; Bush faces one that is feisty and rightly resentful. Reagan got the voters addicted to hypocrisy; Bush will have to cure them. And he won't have Willie Horton to kick around anymore. □



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WASHINGTON DIARIST

The Solipsistic Campaign

THROUGH THE MIRACLE of printed journalism, I am writing this Diarist on the Sunday before the election. Its premise is that George Bush will be elected president on Tuesday, but it's written in the past tense. If Bush loses, I'm assured that I'll have time to change the entire piece before TNR is printed on Wednesday night—in which case, you won't be reading the words I'm writing now. So why am I even explaining all this? Actually, there is a reason: it is that in being so self-referential I am trying to do justice to a campaign that has been the most solipsistic in American history. The issue was the campaign itself—the people who directed it and wrote its speeches, the way it was reported, its tactics. It was a pretty empty campaign, but, face it, we're a pretty empty country these days. Nothing very important seems to be going on. Property values are rising, there's a wide choice of breakfast cereals at the supermarket, and the Russians are being nice. The zeitgeist keeps beaming: Don't worry, be happy. Oh, sure, there's a certain amount of angst floating around, but not enough to elect Michael Dukakis, his shoulders sagging under the weight of the world.

THE BEST THING about the election being over is that we won't have to listen to any more exhortations to vote from all of those good corporate citizens. Big business figures that encouraging Americans to vote sounds high-minded. It polishes the old image, it's uncontroversial, and—most important—it has no effect whatsoever. Could you imagine what would happen if the Americans who don't vote—the young, the poor, and the disaffected—actually took the advice of corporate advisers and went to the polls! Jesse Jackson would end up as president, and you wouldn't be able to deduct the mortgage on your vacation home. It's all too terrible to contemplate. But this is circular reasoning, since the main reason people don't vote is that they're alienated from politics and the mainstream culture, and if they did vote they wouldn't be alienated, so they might even vote Republican. The corporate clarion call to vote addresses a symptom, not a cause. It's futile. People who don't vote don't care who gets elected president. The thing to do is to get them to care, not drag them down to the polls. Democracy, in fact, is far better off without the alienated pulling the levers. Instead of wasting its money on get-out-the-vote efforts, big business should spend its dough encouraging Americans to read—or even to floss daily.

IF YOU THOUGHT the presidential campaign was nasty, you weren't paying attention to the congressional races. In Missouri, the campaign managers of two opponents for a House seat spent much of their time spying on each other's candidate to prove rumors of marital infidelity. In California, a Democrat said that his Republican opponent had raped his first wife (the Republican's *own* wife, that is). And, speaking of rape, it turns out that Governor Mario Cuomo last year was asked the same question that Bernard Shaw asked Governor Michael Dukakis in the second presidential debate. What would Cuomo do if someone raped and killed his wife? He'd bash the guy's head in. Cuomo, a former minor league center fielder, keeps a baseball bat under his bed for the purpose of doing mayhem to intruders: "Every night I pray: 'Before I die, just give me one swing, Lord.'"

NOW THERE'S A candidate! Cuomo could have been president; he would certainly have beaten George Bush. That one's easy. But try these other putative matchups. I've listed my own judgments in the winner's column:

Democrat	*Republican*	*Winner*
Cuomo	Dole	Cuomo
Gephardt	Bush	Bush
Nunn	Bush	Bush
Bradley	Bush	Bradley
Simon	du Pont	Simon
Jackson	Robertson	?

THE SOCIOLOGIST E. Digby Baltzell reports that George Bush will be the fifth upper-class president in this century (after Wilson, the two Roosevelts, and Kennedy). While Bush has done his darnedest to cover up his roots, eatin' pork rinds and listnin' to country music, his wife, Barbara, hasn't. In a wonderful interview on C-SPAN last week, she was tough and smart and funny—and not at all self-referential. She didn't say "I feel" or "I have the sense that." The phrase she used most was: "We were brought up to . . ." The implication was that there was a set of values imparted to her and that those values were good and lasting. The phrase also implies that kids are indeed raised and molded by their parents and that child-rearing is a serious business. Kitty Dukakis, who came on next, blathered on about the campaign being a "growing experience."

THIS IS A busy week for the pontification industry—Washington's fastest-growing. The city is crowded with captains of industry who are attending various conferences and seminars that will fill them in on the meaning of the election and the future course of government (i.e., where interest rates are headed). The experts—TV pundits, professional opiniologists, and other airbags—have not the slightest idea what's going to happen next week or next month. But this has never stopped them before. In moving from the financial racket to the politics racket, I have learned that what the two have in common is that the experts in both fields have rates of accurate prediction far lower than the rules of chance seem to allow. But still, trade associations and large corporations are happy to pay them to gaze into their crystal balls. Why? Daniel Boorstin had the answer in *The Image* 26 years ago: "We are ruled by extravagant expectations . . . of our power to shape the world." Future-telling, which is the business of Wall Street and Washington, is based on exactly these extravagant expectations—as though by predicting things we can make them happen—or, if our predictions are dire ones, that we can soften the blow. The frightening truth is that we can't really tell the future (after all, the Dow could fall 500 points, Reagan could get an arms-reduction treaty with the Soviets, the Dodgers could win the World Series). But we need the comfort that a child gets when, watching a scary movie, he turns and looks up and says, "Daddy, what's going to happen next?"

JAMES K. GLASSMAN

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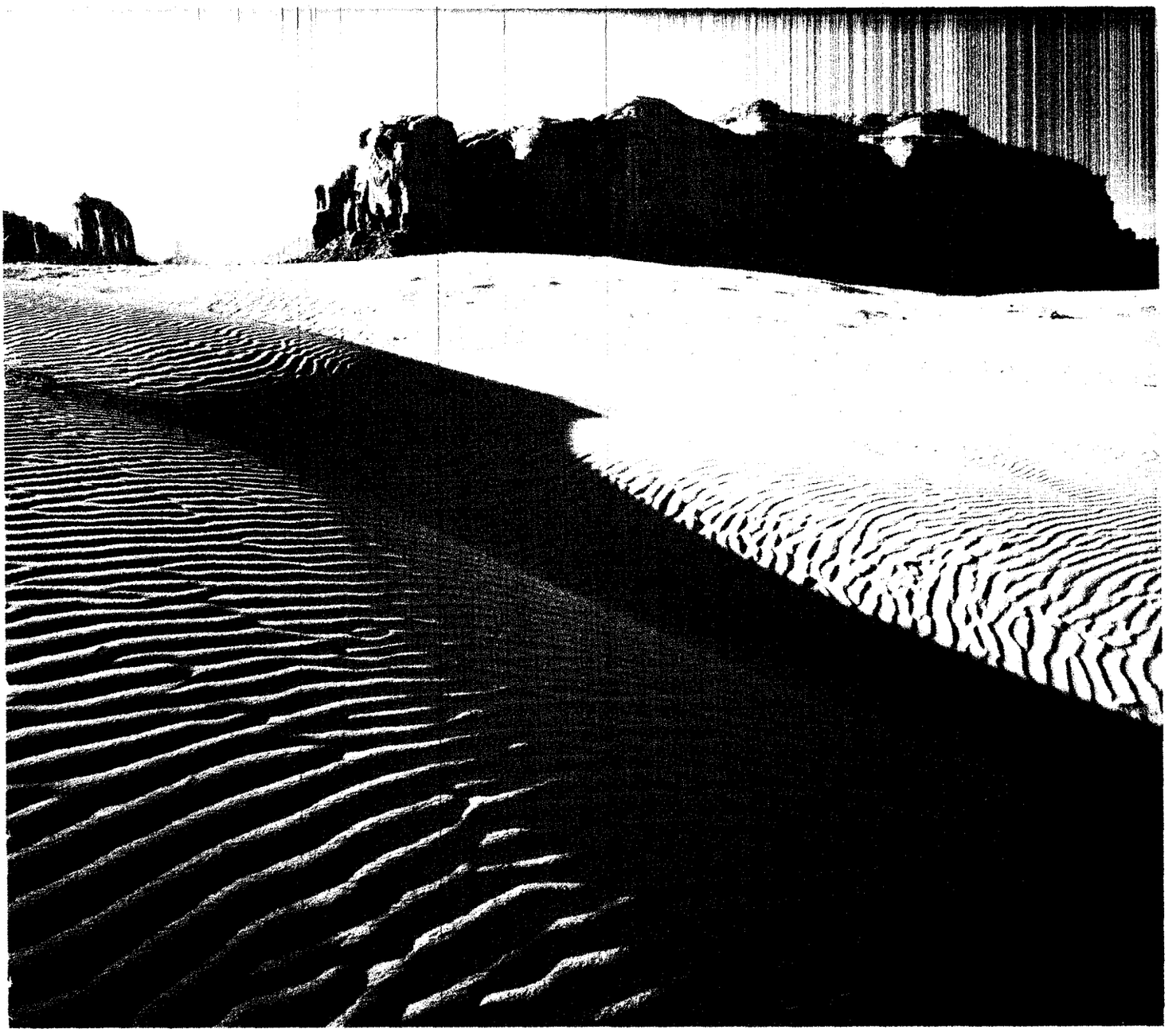

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